

# SPIN

**SPECIAL**  
**5th**  
**ANNIVERSARY**  
**ISSUE**

**SINEAD O'CONNOR**

**THE 10 MOST  
INTERESTING  
MUSICIANS OF  
THE LAST 5 YEARS**

**MIDNIGHT OIL**

**A DAY IN THE LIFE  
OF ROCK 'N' ROLL**

**NWA**

**WILLIAM GIBSON  
SHORT STORY**

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Material chronology prawem autorskim



**This Magazine Contains:** Cover Girl Sinead O'Connor  
by the man who loved her, Legs McNeil **Red Alert**  
More writers and photographers than you'd believe  
chronicle A Day in the Life of Rock 'n' Roll **My Life**  
**as a Ramone by Dee Dee Ramone** Exclusive interviews  
with Professor "Did I Say *That?*" Griff, Midnight Oil  
and AIDS maverick Dr. Peter Duesberg **Screamin' Jay**  
**Hawkins** Another new humor column, The Unclassifieds  
**Jefferson Morley on the Drug-War Defectors** **NWA**  
hanging tough **The 10 most interesting musicians of**  
**the last 5 years** Original fiction by William Gibson  
**Glenn O'Brien remembering the founding days at SPIN**  
**from the safe distance of another job.**

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# Mild

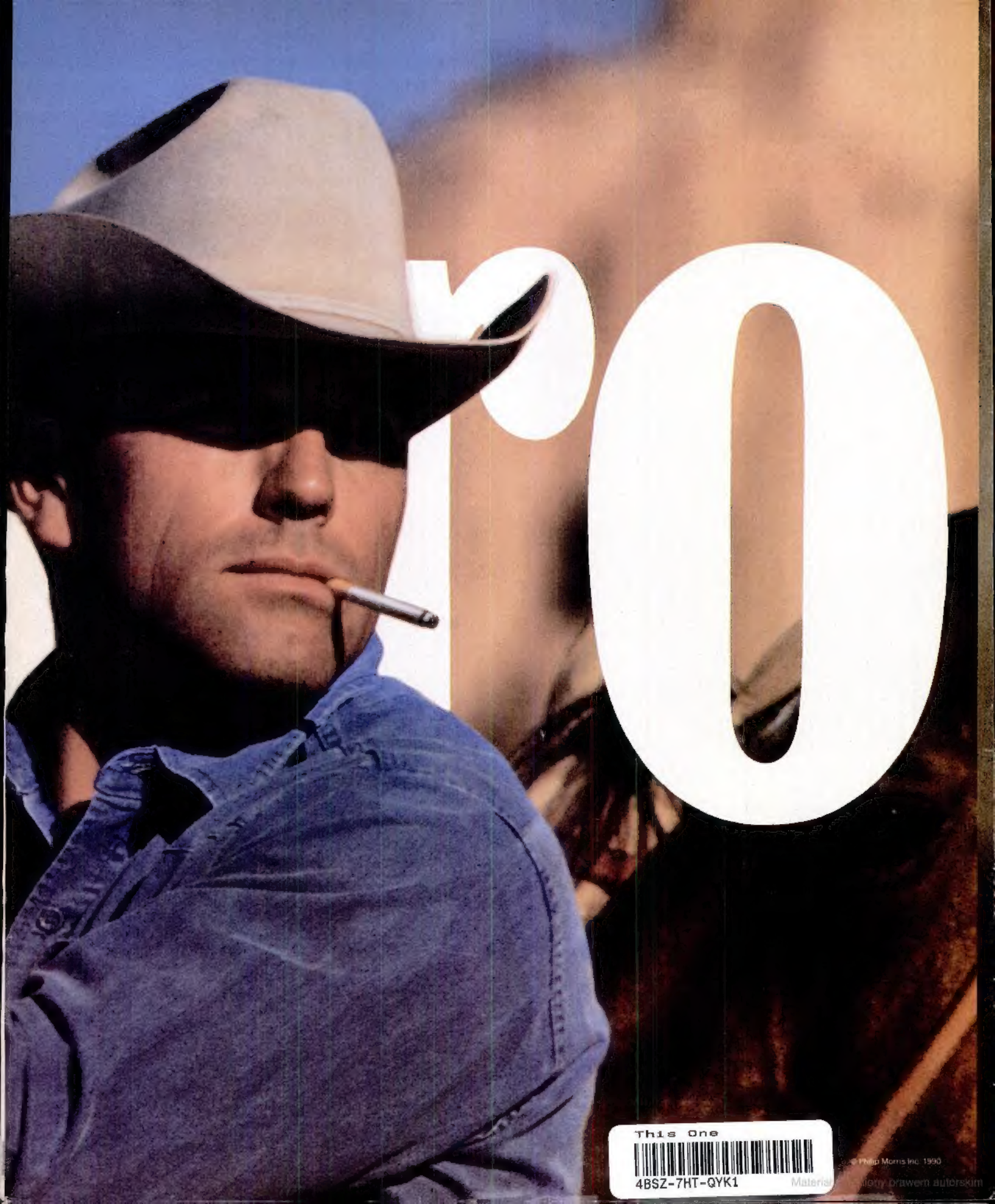
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Material chronology





This One



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Material

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Wszystkie prawa zastrzeżone







I spent all Saturday  
afternoon making this mix  
for my soon-to-be-boyfriend,  
James. He better like it.  
It starts off with that song  
he said reminded him of me  
because of that girl  
in the video. Yeah, right.  
He said he liked my eyes,  
which was unique, since  
I was wearing my sunglasses.  
So I put in that song about  
only wearing sunglasses at night.  
That could be a little dorky  
but I don't want to come off  
too intense, right?

To balance the mood I taped  
that woman from  
South Africa.  
James is serious  
about issues  
like that. I think  
James could be  
more serious about  
issues like me.

Well, I'm not  
going to do  
anything  
horrifying  
like call  
him up.

Right now  
this is the  
best way to  
get through  
to him, if he's  
smart enough to  
understand what  
I'm saying.

Which he must be,  
if he wants to be my soon-  
to-be-forever-boyfriend.



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Volume Six Number One

April 1990

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Cover and above photo by Anton Corbijn

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Back from a tour of the Australian Outback, Midnight Oil know they're not going to change the world overnight. But that doesn't mean they won't try. [By John O'Donnell 27](#)

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NWA's rise has been rapid and sensational. But will the departure of chief lyricist Ice Cube, over money battles, leave these Niggers With Attitude without their soul and intelligence? [By Frank Owen 32](#)

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For 21 years, she fought to do it her way. But even now that the dream has come true, the torment continues. [By Legs McNeil 52](#)

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Bouncing back from the media storm his anti-Semitic remarks caused last year, Public Enemy's former Minister of Information, Professor Griff, is out on his own and brandishing a new solo album, *Pawns In The Game*. [Interview by Jill Pearlman 94](#)

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Screamin' Jay Hawkins has been the most flamboyant rock'n'roll entertainer since the 50s. With a snake around his neck and a bone in his nose, he'll still put a spell on you. [Interview by Scott Cohen 98](#)

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The birth of a magazine. [By Glenn O'Brien 146](#)



# TOP SPIN

I looked at her, sleeping now. Her skinny body looked formless in her disheveled sweatshirt. Her mouth was slightly open, her large, beautiful brown eyes shut away. Her hair was flat and lifeless from traveling. She appeared dimensionless, lying in the darkened compartment in the pale, colorless illumination of the unseen station lights.

The station was quiet and still and the train's engine was off so there wasn't even that murmur or faint vibration. Across the dead tracks, on the next platform, an East German soldier stood, walked a few steps, stood again, walked back the few steps, not just slowly but eternally, defined in gray detail in gray relief against the depthless dark, more than shapeless, ethereal. His gentle footsteps were audible yet somehow soundless, as if their sound evaporated tracelessly. Then he lit a cigarette, cupping the match to his face and illuminating it brightly yellow. For that moment his face looked like a lantern. A lantern of humanity in a motionless, airless, noiseless and timeless place, in between Prague and Berlin, between before and after.

I have failed at everything I have ever done. We all have. Success is more than ephemeral, it's mythological: it doesn't, finally, exist. Life is defined by failure. Its curves and hills and basins are marked finally not by what we reached but where we ultimately failed to go any further. In the end we even fail to stay alive—we die.

And I don't mean this negatively. It's very positive and liberating to understand this. It is not only the reality of life, it is the glorious opportunity and perhaps purpose of it, to prevail beyond our inevitable limitations, even if only momentarily. The splendor of life is not in the monuments we build ourselves but in the tiniest accomplishments we sometimes squeeze out of our imperfect and confusing lives.

In Prague, Celia showed me one of the spots where the demonstrating students were beaten by the police, which sparked the amazing Czech revolution. The spot was the wall of an alcove off of one of the main streets leading to Wenceslas square, marked only by a now cold, foot-high hill of melted wax from the candles that had burnt there in the weeks of the revolution. The wall was dark. She

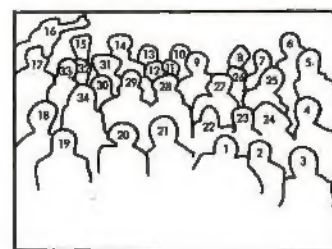
showed me a patch of dried blood that I would not have seen otherwise. I touched the anonymous stain. I can't tell you what it felt like to touch it except that I felt it touched me. It felt like life. Silently heroic and commonly magnificent.

Days later, walking around an exhibition of photographs by the students of FAMU, the Prague photography school, chronicling the incredible scenes of the revolution, I cried, careful not to show I was crying, as I watched the accompanying video playing repeatedly in the corner of the gallery. I couldn't see it clearly because of the crowd sitting and standing in front of me, unspeaking and attentive, and I couldn't understand the difficult language of the narration, but I was overwhelmed by the simple, even modest, retelling of the gigantic accomplishment. In America we aren't comfortable with an historic event until we have neatly packaged it into a souvenir—the *Life* magazine special or the TV special report. Packaged it is containable and we are unaccountable for its evolution, its ongoing unfolding. The spontaneity of human continuance is safely bleached out of our experience of the event. But in Prague, after the fanfare is the patient, brave rebuilding. You would have cried too I think. And you would do no better a job of explaining why than I have.

This is a partial list of things I have failed at: husbandry, publishing, writing, friendship, love, business, driving a car when the brakes didn't work, leading some people and partnering others. Nonetheless I continue to attempt all these things, amazingly—when you consider the scope and depth of the failures—unfazed, in fact actually more intensely, as if the accumulation of mistakes were compounded inspiration. (Well, there are exceptions: I'm shy about cars with faulty brakes and before I get married again I'm going to kick the tires, so to speak). It's as if in the process of failure one creates, one leaves one's mark, one's own microscopic smear. I don't even know why it matters, just that it feels that it does. And failure doesn't matter, finally the repetition of failure renders it no more remarkable than breathing. Failure is the process of life, the uneven stones in the uneven footpath that leads to the mostly



Kurt Munkshi



**SPIN:** Bob Guccione, Jr. (1); Grace Whitney (2); David Horowitz (3); John Rollins (4); Stephen Swid (5); David Brezovec (6);

Mary Ann Lukas (7); Parker Phillips (8); Jennifer Hoyt (9); Jim Groar (10); Rita Malatesta (11); Frank Owen (12); Karen Schooner (13); Chris Callaway (14); Drew Hopkins (15); Dean Kuipers (16); Doug Bowman (17); Bob Keating (18); Bruce Sheridan (19); Nathaniel Wico (20); Michael Herson (21); Heather Maloney (22); Pat Brazill (23); Mindy Spar (24); Luis Tilletson (25); Charlene Mills (26); José Ramos (27); Susan Decapite (28); Mark Weinberg (29); Brendan Amyot (30); Mikail Myron (31); Celia Farber (32); Sam Mattingly (33); Paula Romano (34).

undignified end. So life as a whole must have meaning because so little of what we do does, and none of it changes the end result. All organisms live to do no more than eventually expire; only the human aspires to mark the spot before he is swept off it, only man is driven irrationally to make some statement of consequence, to change the simply unchangeable, to shout his challenge at the impossible Heavens. Man is even prepared to use himself as the ink to make what he hopes will be an indelible mark. And sometimes it is indelible.

When we crossed Checkpoint Charlie from West to East Berlin for the

first time, it was a cold Saturday afternoon, the day before New Year's Eve. Our taxi was motionless in line. Nobody was speaking. I heard a distinct banging sound that neither rose nor fell, just existed, stopping occasionally and continuing soon again. It sounded like a pencil being tapped lazily on a table. I asked Celia, who I expected to know everything about Eastern Europe, what it was. "It's someone with a hammer and chisel breaking a piece off the wall," she said.

I listened. And I realized it was the sound of all human endeavor: tiny, puny and earnest. I will never forget it.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

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# POINT LETTERS BLANK

Edited by Robin Reinhardt

## Man in the Mirror

January's Topspin by Legs McNeil tells it like it is and shoves an honest indestructible opinion in your face—it's the best editorial I have ever read! I am relieved and ecstatic that such an "in your face" publication exists. I should have picked up SPIN a whole lot sooner.

Art Barrows, Jr.  
Stockton, CA

## The Eight-Legged Groove Machine

Dean Kuipers has proven that one of the today's most energetic bands are neither stuck up nor fucked up. As I see it, the Red Hot Chili Peppers [February], with their frenetic, hard funk background, may have all the signs of punk influences, but their big hearts and love of life shine through.

David Madigan  
Chicago, IL

To hear a band talk about sex, drugs and rock'n'roll in such an open manner is refreshing. But I do have one beef, why just Flea on the cover?

Pat Vaccarino  
Brooklyn, NY

It's nice to know that the Red Hot Chili Peppers are so concerned about the young black couple that couldn't get waited on in a Charlotte, NC restaurant. It's refreshing that the Red Hot Chili

Peppers would even care, considering that they're making such a good living ripping off George Clinton, James Brown and Stevie Wonder, just to name a few. I hope SPIN readers will not judge the whole city of Charlotte the way the Red Hot Chili Peppers did.

Joe Young  
Charlotte, NC

That tattoo on Anthony's back won't look too stupid when he's 60.

Moses Lawn  
New York, NY

## Bed-Side Manner

I am learning the conventional AIDS theories in medical school. SPIN, however, provides me with the most informative and cutting-edge dope on the real politics and controversy behind the "science" that we are being fed. Reading SPIN helps me keep a little perspective—something that will hopefully prevent me from becoming a party-line doctor and help me actually care for human beings.

Irene Haralabatos  
Somerset, NJ

## All That Jazz

Legs McNeil's editorial lead-in to Chet Baker's autobiographical excerpt [February] succumbs to the fallacy that rock 'n'roll invented the "cool, tortured,

beautiful and doomed." So often when jazz figures surface in mainstream pop, we focus on their desolation and legitimize it by embracing it as part of the canon of rock'n'roll, diminishing the image of jazz and its pervasive influence on our culture. Rock'n'roll learned well from jazz, but please, don't pull the blanket of revisionism over the eyes of youth. From the Word of jazz, mighty sermons have been delivered.

Tim DuRoche  
Minneapolis, MN

## Eco-Rock

I've been waiting for a music magazine to write a serious article on the environment ("The Greening of Planet Pop," January). Even though it seems fashionable to sing about the earth's problems, at least some kind of awareness is being created. That is the key. What actions we do today, positive or negative, affect our lives and our children's lives tomorrow.

Karen Hanna  
Brampton, Ontario, Canada

## Tarnished Virtue

Over the last half of 1989, you put out one of the best music/youth culture magazines I have ever read. Why did you change all that with your February issue? Why does the design look like the tacky, bland work you used to put out?

And where did you dig up this completely unfunny and distasteful "humorist," D.J. Samuels?

Felipe Jones  
Brooklyn, NY

## Beauty And the Beast

You know, we never thought somebody who was obnoxious enough to make popsicles out of urine would end up marrying a former Reagan aide, dressing like Ann-Margaret and singing songs only yuppies like. The Belinda Carlisle of our worst nightmares [January]—from chubby punkette to corporate rock crooner. What a bummer.

Aaron and Barb  
Seymour, IN

Tina Turner has a lot more than a great set of legs [January] and SPIN should present more to its readers than Scott Cohen's embarrassing collection of beauty tips and fashion facts. The editorial by Legs McNeil [Topspin] is the kind of writing that makes me buy SPIN.

Jennifer Baker  
New York, NY

## ERRATA

Larry Bloch is the club owner of Wetlands ["The Greening of Planet Pop," January], not Larry Black. We apologize for the mix-up.





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# FLASH

Edited by Frank Owen

## Hellfire

*The devil went down to North Carolina. He was looking for a soul to steal. He found Dexter Romweber, rockabilly hellion and leader of the Flat Duo Jets.*

Legend has it that Dexter Romweber was such a crazy teenager, his family—the notorious Romweber clan that includes sister Sara, from Let's Active and now Snatches of Pink, and brother Joe from UV Prom—wouldn't let him eat at the dinner table. So Dexter and his drummer friend Crow packed up and left Chapel Hill, North Carolina, for Athens, Georgia, where it so happened a documentary about the Athens music scene was being filmed. Dexter wasn't technically a local, but they put him in "Athens, Ga. Inside/Out" anyway. He stampeded across a rickety frat house stage, gutting his Silvertone for bastard rockabilly licks against Crow's Intemperate rhythms. He ransacked a big brown F-hole acoustic, playing "Comin' Round the Mountain" with the Reverend Howard Finster—an immortal meeting of the sacred and the profane. His reckless performances made the rest of the Athens music scene—R.E.M., the B-52's, Pylon—seem pale.

Five years have passed, and the Flat Duo Jets—now a trio, with bassist Tone—have just released their debut album on Dog Gone Records. Recorded live to two-track in a garage, *Flat Duo Jets* contains two punkabilly wipe-out originals and 12 covers of obscure 50s and 60s songs, from Louis Prima's "Sing Sing" to Benny Joy's "Wild Wild Lover." The playing is unrestrained, untainted by cynicism, blistering and beautiful—it's the rock'n'roll flame that music from the 70s, 80s and 90s wants you to believe no longer burns.

With the album finally out, Dexter, now 23, has left home again. Tonight he's in New York City at Joe's Bar on East 6th Street, sipping a Sprite and eating pizza. Dexter's given up drinking, drugs and women in an attempt to get his shit together and his band off the ground. He is sallow, reserved, and then *whump!* he lets loose. "Chapel Hill's a very limiting place," he says. "It's small. There's no wild rockers, there ain't nothin' around, man. I don't want to go back. I want to travel and really live for a long time, man. They gotta save me. I gotta be saved from my hometown. It's sick. I'm sick as hell."

For Dexter, Jerry Lee Lewis's question of whether rock'n'roll is the devil's music comes down to a human issue: how much of himself he's willing to give up to make the music he loves. Eyes pale as ice, Dexter says, "I had to give up my sanity. I've had to give up everything, in a sense, because I have nothing. I have nothing at home. So I'm out here, trying to cure myself of how I tried to live with nothing there for me. I haven't had anything, so I'm trying to make this band work so I can get out and see people and enjoy people and have interesting experiences and *lighten up* a little. I've been stifled. The horizon has been too bleak. For too long."

Dexter opens the empty pizza box and scrabbles for one last crumb. "The devil—he won't leave me alone."

—Karen Schoemer

*Flat Duo Jets (l-r): Dexter Romweber, Tone and Crow*

Pat Baskin



# HEAVY ROTATION



## Staff Selections

**The Mission UK** *Carved in Sand* (Mercury/PolyGram) The Mission UK's third studio LP, replete with passion, mythology and religion, explodes with shocking issues of child abuse, social injustice and addiction—Wayne Hussey's intricate mind exposed through his poetic, gripping verse. Carved in Sand, with its meta-ic riffs and luring, mystical melodies exceeds where past efforts have failed—truly superb. (Reinhardt)

**Sinead O'Connor** *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got* (Chrysalis) Over the past three years, Sinead O'Connor had a son and got married. Her second LP, a tribute to her new life and newfound peace, is a placid step from the violent, ignited *The Lion and the Cobra*. With a soothing voice—at times almost a whisper—conservative strings and sparse musical tones, it's Sinead at her best, and a pleasant surprise at that. (Reinhardt)

**ABC** *Up* (Mercury) Like those fellow masters of the ironic gesture the Pet Shop Boys, ABC now fancy themselves as a house music outfit. Owning more than a passing debt to the New Jersey sound of Blaze, the overblown romanticism of ABC has never sounded better. A classic of fake soul along the lines of Bowie's *Young Americans*. (Owen)

**Lil Louis and The World From The Mind Of Lil Louis** (Epic) Redefining the limits of what constitutes a house album, Lil Louis—of 'French Kiss' fame—gives full reign to his bizarre musical imagination on this astonishing debut. In a genre where anonymity isn't necessarily a bad thing, Lil Louis stamps his distinctive signature on what is undoubtedly one of the most adventurous house albums ever made. (Owen)

**Cowboy Junkies**, *The Caution Horses* (RCA) The guitars can still sound like they're trying to stagger to their feet after puking the r guts out, but the follow-up to *The Trinity Sessions* is lighter, breezier, healthier—the Junkies are letting the sun in after a bad night's sleep. Lap steel, mandolin, accordion and harp sigh in and out of these country-folk ballads about self-discovery and decay; Margo Timmins' voice is as far away as yesterday's dreams. (Schoemer)

**The Cramps**, *Stay Sick* (Enigma) They're back! If *Stay Sick*'s trashy psychobilly riffs and Elvis-on-acid sensibility seem a tad familiar even after a prolonged absence, that's as it should be. Swamp muck like this never goes out of style: it's as pure and sleazy now as ever, and it sounds fresh every time you dig it up. (Greer)

## Comic Relief

Responsible for some of the most innovative comic books of the 80s—*Swamp Thing* and *Watchmen*—Alan Moore unveils his latest creation, *Big Numbers*.

"The superhero should never have been allowed to dominate the entire medium," laments comics writer Alan Moore. "It's as if western films dominated the entire cinema. It's preposterous." For most of the 80s, Moore paid his rent writing about those caped crusaders. With works like *Watchmen* and *Swamp Thing*, he gave the genre an astonishing depth and literacy. Now, he's writing about a world "where people don't have to wear their underwear over their trousers before they can appear in a comic book." It's our world.

Moore is talking about his new 12-part opus, *Big Numbers*. "Through the lives of some 40 characters, we're going to try and show the ways in which chaos tends to impinge on our lives at this juncture in the 20th century. We do have chaos in our weather, our politics, our economics, our emotional lives, our relationships; and, to some degree, these are pretty scary times for most people. Most people see a world of turbulence about them that doesn't make any sense at all

and in which they feel adrift and frightened, but what we're going to do is to use the science of fractal mathematics to suggest that if people would just take a couple of steps back from that turbulence and chaos, it might not be so random and frightening after all. It might be quite pretty and quite orderly."

Fractal mathematics finds order in seemingly random patterns, like broken shards of glass or cigarette smoke. But one doesn't need to understand Benoit Mandelbrot's equations to enjoy *Big Numbers*. As the book opens, Christine Gathercole, an author wearing a Cure T-shirt, returns to her hometown of Hampton, soon to be the location of an American-style mall. A window shatters on the train, Christine curses, and an old man primly informs her, "I don't think there's any need to

use language." Moore has spent two years preparing for this series: he expects to take at least two more years completing its 480 pages. How does he keep all the details of his small British town straight? "I've got a huge wall chart," Moore explains. "And what I've done is I've divided that up into a graph, with 40 characters' names down the left-hand side, and the 12 issue numbers along the top, and something like 500 squares, and each square is filled with a tiny, cramped little paragraph of handwriting explaining what happens to that character in that issue. It looks like a horrible gray blur; it looks like the work of a mental patient. It's like 'Migraine Made Visible.' But it does tell me everything that happens in the novel and the order in which it happens."

—Gavin Edwards



## Dear Elvis,

Dear Elvis,

There's something I've been meaning to ask you for a long time: when you appeared on Ed Sullivan's show, they only showed you from the waist up. The lower half of your body, including your famous pelvis, was blacked out. Was your pelvis censored or was that some slick marketing ploy?

Debbie Petucco  
Dallas, Texas



Dear Debbie,

Well, that's a long story. Mr. Sullivan was having trouble with his sponsors, namely a famous underwear company. During the rehearsals, the underwear people saw me shakin' away and thought my britches were too tight. They thought that it gave everyone the urge to scratch. See, they just didn't get it that the urge wasn't to scratch but to rock'n'roll! But at that time people weren't really aware of the world's need to rock!

Anyway, Mr. Sullivan, afraid they were going to cancel their sponsorship, conferred with the Col. and it was decided that maybe 50s America just wasn't ready for so much pure, unadulterated, thrusting sexuality broadcast into their Sunday night living rooms. So the cameramen were instructed to shoot me from the waist up. But the imagination is a powerful thing. And in the end, it all got through.

lots of love,

elvis

SINCE THE START OF THE COLUMN, ELVIS HAS BEEN BESIEGED WITH LETTERS. WE SELECT SOME, GATHER ROUND THE OUBA BOARD AND WAIT FOR HIS RESPONSE. IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR ELVIS, SEND IT TO SPIN, 6 W 18TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10011. PLEASE KEEP IT SHORT. ELVIS IS STILL A BUSY MAN.



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# Now For A Feast

Going against the grain of current English rock music, Eat draw on a rawer collection of influences. Say hello to swampadelic pop.



Courtesy PolyGram Records

Despite their delectable name, Eat, a five-man, mostly vegetarian band from the King's Cross section of London, don't particularly enjoy talking about food. "Enough of the food! We'll talk about anything but food!" yells Paul Noble, lyricist and guitarist. Paul is relaxing in his London flat, listening to Wire and Neneh Cherry, and sipping Evian. Leadsinger Ange—"The Most Shaggy Man in Pop" according to one British weekly—is at a friend's place 100 miles away in the West Country of Britain. He's just given blood. "I have a rare blood group—B negative," he says. "People sort of beg me for blood."

While most British bands have chosen to echo 60s psychedelia

(Stone Roses, Happy Monday), dance (808 State, The Beloved) and pop (Jesus Jones, The Wonder Stuff), Eat's debut LP, *Sell Me A God* (Fiction/PolyGram) is bursting with heavy guitar riffs, R&B and cajun funk. It's a sound they call swampadelic: "A mixture of funkadelic, psychedelia and swamp music—like Screamin' Jay Hawkins with a bit of moaning harmonicas," says Paul.

Paul, bassist Tim Sewall, guitarist Max Noble and drummer Pete Howard gradually started moving from their sedate West Country town of Bath to London in 1984 where they squatted in different flats for over five years, on welfare, playing at different parties and

events. It was only towards the end of their homeless period that they met fellow-squatter Ange, a recording studio security guard with very curious hair that looked like a bowl of noodles had been spilled on his head.

"Homelessness is a big problem in London and it's getting bigger all the time," says Paul. "I've lived in squats with snow coming through the roof. It's very unpleasant—dangerous and nasty. I was threatened quite a few times—people breaking into my place, sledge hammering the thing. You get very irate tenants coming around threatening to kill you."

"The situation has changed now," says Ange. "We actually have someplace to live but it's

still an important issue in the stuff we write about."

*Sell Me A God's* influences range from Joey Ramone and Iggy Pop to Muddy Waters and Abba. Their stalwart songs include the absurd "Skin" ("Skin ain't got no tailored pocket/Where you gonna put your wallet"), the amusing "Fat Man" ("I saw the fat man do the shimmy/And he shimmied like he didn't give a shit"), the semi-cappella beatnik eulogy "Body Bag" and the tranquil "Mr. & Mrs. Smack."

Paul: "In England, it seems very polarized right now. It's a heavy dance scene, an indie scene and pop. There's no one playing music with a relationship to R&B. I think we do. We obviously use a lot of dance

stuff. Some of the newer material is dance inclined because we like that, but I think Eat is coming out of different roots really. I don't think we're into becoming legends—well, Ange is."

Ange: (excited) "Yeah, I'm massive stadium rock. I want massive recognition—everywhere I turn!"

Paul: "So when is the solo album coming out?"

Ange: "Oh didn't you know? I released it last week."

You want constant worship from your fans, Ange?

Paul: "Worship from the rest of the band."

Ange: "This is getting out of hand. Let's talk about food again."

—Robin Reinhardt

THEIR DEBUT ALBUM IS ABOUT POLITICS, HISTORY, STREET CRIMINALS, DRUGS AND CORRUPTION. THE HARDLINE ACCORDING TO WARRIOR SOUL.

## SOUL SOLDIERS

Warrior Soul want rock'n'rol to die. "It's been done," says frontman Kory Clarke. "I'd like to find something better—stronger and heavier. American bands seem to be in competition with Ax. Rose to see who can be the most crazy, the most bad. Who's screwed the most women."

"These bands [say] 'worship my dick. Worship my beauty. Worship my sorrow.' Everyone talks

about the models, the gay people. People who weren't born beautiful—they're sent there to worship these people. It's ridiculous. I don't think money should be worshipped. Or people in power."

He says this with complete conviction. The fact that Warrior Soul play fierce, prophet-of-doom, Doors-meet-the Cult rock'n'roll disturbs him not at all. Kory Clarke is comfortable with ambiguity.

"I'm a real General Patton fan," he explains. "He was really brilliant, a great warrior tactician. There was a real cheap TV docudrama called 'Patton's Last Stand.' [In the end] he's dying and his wife goes, 'the next time the world's in trouble, he'll come back as a warrior soul,' and I went—Warrior Soul, that's fuckin' it, man! It's hard but it's spiritual—it's contradictory and it sounds modern."

Clarke has passionate opinions about everything. Patton. Winston Churchill. Art history. None of the CIA connections. Why 10-second TV news sound bites are bad for America. But then Warrior Soul's *Last Decade Dead Century* album is about all of that. And street criminals and drugs and corruption. "There's been more human killing of life on this planet than any other century before," he says about the title. "The loss of plant and animal life is unparalleled in history. We've killed everything and we've gotten good at it. The album's like a time capsule—where we are right now. You could put it in the fuckin' Smithsonian."

Clarke's original music biz ambitions were more modest. He was a successful drummer in Detroit, but switched to performance art when he hit New



Kristen Collier

York's Lower East Side. Everyone told him he wouldn't get anywhere without a backing band. "I thought, I gotta go back to this archaic format that everyone understands so that I can get my art out," he remembers. "So I said, fine. In six months I'm going to have the best fucking band in the city. No one in town would work with me: 'You're too politically minded, why are you singing about that shit, because nobody really cares.'"

He finally "hired the dregs of society," scored a half-million dollar deal with Geffen and underwent a complete line-up change. As they now stand, drummer Paul Ferguson used to be in King Joke, bassist Pete McClanahan came from a boogie/boogie background and guitarist John Ricco was recruited from a cattle-call audition.

"I want to teach [the audience] to think a bit more. We come more from a 60s-70s groove—psychedelic in a 90s way," Clarke declares. "I'm a parallel information source on what's going on in their world."

—Daina Darzin



Ross Heifman/Veranda





For people who  
like to smoke...



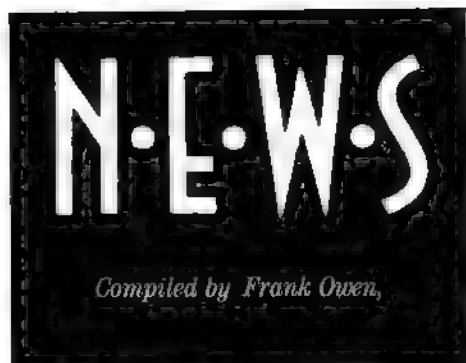
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More Waves: Courtesy of Epic

## MULTIRACIAL ROCK 'N' ROLL

Blame it on that damn Guns N' Roses song "One In a Million." Once again, hard rock/heavy metal's got a rep for *de facto* segregation at best, active racism at worst. When, in fact, more and more multiracial rock bands are proving their audience is color-blind. Spurred on, in part, by the platinum-plated success of Living Colour, there's a whole list of heavy rock bands with non-Caucasian members: among them 24-7 Spyz, King's X, Bad Brains, Dan Reed Network, Death Angel, Soundgarden, Testament, Zoetrope, Suicidal Tendencies, Toby MacAlpine, Dream Theater, Napalm Death, Zoo White, Jingo DeLunch. And, ironically enough, Guns N' Roses (Slash is half black).

"Everyone thinks there's a problem, but there really isn't," thinks Dan Reed, who's opened for Run-DMC and Bon Jovi in the past year. "The hardest part was getting a record deal. They said they didn't know how to market the band, there was no place to pigeonhole us. Gigs were tough at first because they didn't want any problems with the crowds. I have a black guitarist and bass player; when we opened for Bon Jovi [in Europe], you'd think when the lights came on, people would be horrified [if the club owners were right]. But the audience didn't care at all. In fact, we had a great response."

However, Doug Pinnick of King's X says, "a friend of mine in an all-black metal band in L.A. says when they play, people are afraid to come up front." Epic A&R man Bob Feinleig insists his recent signing, Suicidal Tendencies, don't have this problem. "Any hassles at their shows come from an aggressive hardcore element. Another metal band on our label, Gothic Slam, are four Latinos and a white guy; they play Jersey and it's just kids playing for kids; there aren't any color lines or issues drawn about the fact they're Latinos."

"When I first started, it was real scary," admits Katon DePena, ex-lead singer of Metal Blade Records artists Hrax. "Some people were tripping out on a black guy singing speed metal, but I got comfortable with it. I had people to look up to, like Jimi Hendrix, and Phil Lynott of Thin Lizzy. I'm sure they went through much heavier shit than I even could imagine. We played the Santa Monica Civic with Exodus and Venom once," he recalls, "and it was so cool, watching people stage dive and not care what color I was." DePena's new band, World Trust, is more in a metal/funk vein. "Our bass player's Japanese, our guitar player's Italian, our drummer's Mexican," he explains. "I'm interested in bringing people together. When I was growing up, I'd go see Black Sabbath and Ted Nugent and pray I'd have a good time and not have someone give me a hassle 'cause I was the only black kid there. But it worked out. I'm still alive. And now, a lot of kids that like hard rock or funk-punk are coming to our shows 'cause they don't feel intimidated, 'cause I know someone in the band is the same [race] as them."

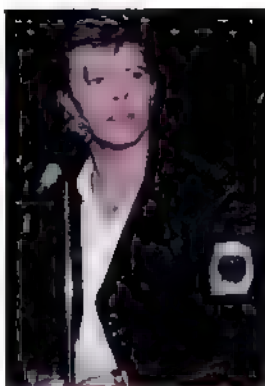
"If Living Colour does even better on their next record, I guarantee every record company will have its black rock band," says Doug Pinnick. "Black people might get mad at me for saying this, but I get real tired of separation. Black coalitions and black TV and black radio. I'm black and I'm proud of it, but I'm an individual. We should keep our culture, but why make such a big deal of it?"

"There's always an underlying race thing in everything that happens in America," says his white bandmate, Jerry Gaskill. "But I don't personally see the barrier there. Jimi Hendrix got kinda popular. Prince had white guys in his band. I just don't see it as a problem. People who like us don't feel that way, and they're the ones who matter."

—Darna Darzan

## YOU ARE THE DJ

The first all-request concert tour ever is now under way. David Bowie, perhaps influenced by the success with which his colleagues, Mr. McCartney, Mr. Rumsey, Mr. Starr and Mr. Jagger, are entering the 90s on the strength of their recent concert tours, will temporarily abandon *Tin Machine* to bring a show comprised of "his most popular songs, performed in a straight-on, originally designed context" to the United States from May 16 to August 9, and to Australia and Europe at various dates in between. To register your specific song requests for the "Sound + Vision 1990" World Concert Tour in the U.S., call 900-2-BOWIE 90; a jovial, interactive phone voice will tell you how to place votes for the five Bowie tunes you want to hear. Sure, it costs \$2 for the first minute and \$1.50 for each additional minute, but weigh the cost against the value of having the



unique opportunity to make a creative contribution to an artist of Bowie's stature. Not to mention your chance to take the Bowie quiz, which enables you to enter the phone line contest to win a trip for two to Europe, where you'll join the "Sound + Vision" tour for a week! Attend a party with David! Party backstage with his band! And more!

—Mim Udovitch

## The Real PoMo

If you caught the pilot of *Buzz* last March on MTV, you remember the aggressive barrage of weirdo global images—Russian ads, Caribbean game shows, naked bodies, fashion, with each image averaging 36 seconds. If TV is a drug, this was acid. Starting in April, *Buzz* is going weekly and international, debuting as MTV's futuristic, one-world youth culture mag. Produced and directed

by Mark Pellington and Jon Klein, the London-based *Buzz* is using worldwide bureaus to dig up underground info (currently Africa, the Far East and Brazil) and foreign networks to syndicate (they're negotiating with Japan, Europe, Brazil, China and Latin America). "Everyone is different and everyone is the same," says Pellington. "*Buzz* is about looking at yourself, saying forget the past,



from this day on I will not be ignorant and racist." They focus on technology, culture, art, attitude and nuclear anxiety through a cyberpunk lens; upcoming pieces included the future millennium, NASA's computer Virtual Reality and the relation between African voodoo and Muzak. "It's not the Jetsons or Buck Rogers," says Pellington. "The future is now."

—Jill Pearlman

Courtesy of MTV



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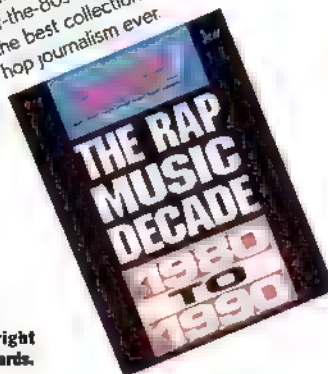
THE

COLD  
ROCK

STUFF

These are a few of  
our favorite things.THE  
SOURCE

Aptly named, The Source is nothing as simple as a hip hop fanzine: rather, it's an invaluable resource of views and information on a phenomenon that is still under-documented. Founded by Jon "The Sultan" Shecter and Dave Mays, two seniors at Harvard, The Source stands in marked contrast to teeny-bopper rap mags like *Word Up*. Their recent end-of-the-80s edition is one of the best collections of hip hop journalism ever.



Compiled by  
Frank Owen,  
Christian Wright  
and Gavin Edwards.

## PXL-8000

Fisher-Price's hand-held video camera costs a fraction of an adult Sony, records on a cassette tape, and films in distorted, grainy black and white. The Pixel makes hi-tech excessive and art school obsolete. Now discontinued by the manufacturer, it's sure to become a cult object.



courtesy of Fisher-Price

## MISCEGENATION

Hot topic for the 90s. The subtext of much of the new Public Enemy album *Fear Of A Black Planet* and the subject of Spike Lee's film after next, so-called race-mixing is a constant source of discussion within the black community though white folks generally maintain a discrete silence. I have seen the future of race relations in America and it's styled by Benetton.



Paul O. Colliton

## TWIN PEAKS

This weekly TV series, co-written and directed by "Blue Velvet" David Lynch, grips like a vice. With murder in fetishistic detail, over-the-top romantic complexities, a flawless cast (especially Kyle McLachlan as an FBI agent), and dialogue as unpredictable as the daily news, "Twin Peaks" makes the small screen bigger. And only Lynch—whose sensibility is part jet-black humor, part burdensome intellect, part hopeless romance—could get the other-worldly Julie Cruise on primetime or inspire ABC to take a \$1 million bath by limiting commercial interruptions. The idiot box will never be the same again.

Russell Wong/Outline Press



© 1989 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation

## THE SIMPSONS

Slickly animated and cynically motivated, the Simpson family has busted out of "The Tracy Ullman Show" and into movie theaters, Butterfinger commercials and their own primetime half hour on Sunday evenings. The Simpsons has the sass of the classic Warner Brothers toons with a post-Chernobyl atmosphere that comes courtesy of the family's hometown major industries—the nuclear power plant, the toxic waste dump and the tire yard.







STYLING: [illegible]  
HAIR: [illegible]  
MAKEUP: [illegible]  
DRESSING: [illegible]  
SHIRT: [illegible]  
TIE: [illegible]  
SHOES: [illegible]  
ACCESSORIES: [illegible]

Z. CAVARICCI



## TALKING ALL THAT

## Jazz

The Dish, The Dirt, The Inside Dope  
Sussed by DANNY FIELDS

Although the primary purpose of the Rock'n Roll Hall of Fame is to honor the greats of yesteryear, the sub-text of virtually every annual ceremony, like the one held this January at the Waldorf-Astoria, is the deep hatred that exists among the members of so many musical partnerships. Mostly, the loathing is submerged for the duration of the glittering evening, so that in front of one's industry peers and the worshipping world media, it all looks like a big happy photo from "16" magazine. It was Paul McCartney's no-show at the 1988 Hall of Fame dinner that first exposed, in an actual statement to the press, the animosity between the erstwhile mop-tops that was running so deep at the time. And everyone knew that Diana Ross stayed away not because of a previous engagement, but because she simply would not get up on a stage and put her arms around Mary Wilson, author of the not-all-that-unkind-to-Miss-Ross *Dream Girls*.

This year, everyone showed up and behaved, though it is well known that Frankie Valli and the other Four Seasons have not communicated in years, nor have Gerry Goffin and Carole King; longstanding tensions between brothers Ray and Dave Davies of The Kinks have been known to erupt in violence (didn't Ray once stab Dave with a fork for taking one of his french-fries?) and ditto Pete and Roger of The Who.

Until they appeared together for photo ops before this year's dinner, it was rumored that Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel, so strong is their dislike for each other, would not even pose together. But how could they turn up and still behave so childishly was the question, and the answer was, they didn't: in fact, Paul Simon, in his acceptance speech in front of the entire ruling class of the English-speaking music industry finally acknowledged the long-running situation in a most graceful way. "How could I be happier than to be inducted into the Hall of Fame with my oldest pal?" he said, to a knowing roar of laughter. "Now we can join those other happy couples—like and Tina Turner, the Everly Brothers, Mick and Keith, Paul and all of the other Beatles."

Just this postscript on the Hall of Fame: Miss Ross did show up this year, but aside from not making herself available to the press before dinner, she was totally playful, friendly, glamorous and cooperative, which is to say, though she didn't

get to sing very much, she did get onstage at the end of the ceremonies for the traditional "jam session" that finishes off the show each year. So did Bruce Springsteen, so did Sting, and so did every other musician/performer in the room, with the exception of U2, who neither bothered with the press, the jam session, or, it seemed, their personal hygiene. So they become the winners of this year's Rock'n Roll Hall of Fame "star trip" award.

On a happier note, it was great to see a real rock'n'roll "struggle story" reach a happy end, or should we say, happy midpoint. The band in question is Kix, out of Baltimore, one of the hardest working outfits in this business, on the road 300 nights a year, etc., etc. Only problem is, they'd never been able to sell records, until their current album, *Blow My Fuse*, broke out for them, after ten years with the same record company, Atlantic, which refused, as did the band, ever to give up hope. A lavish gold-record party was held at a cavernous gourmet Chinese restaurant in New York's theater district, and when the label moguls and the group members and their managers got up on the platform and just fell into a round of

hugging each other, there was hardly a dry eye in the house... One does resent a citizen of another country, here to promote his product in order to bring home good old US dollars, launching into a tirade about how much he loathes and fears America, and get this, how the citizens of the Soviet Union are much more free than we are!! This is what I had to endure from James Brown, the percussionist of UB40, whose intelligence, via printed interviews, I had always admired. First there was much about America being a "very segregated society, much more culturally intolerant than England, and America is the most culturally intolerant country I've ever been to. Rather than trying to sell TVs and condoms and trying to sterilize Asian women, Americans should be learning from other cultures what makes them so much more successful than Western cultures."

Then came this exchange between me, James Brown, and UB40's Norman Hassan. **SPIN: When you toured Russia in '85, what was the political climate in the pre-glasnost era?** Brown: It wasn't sinister. Yes we were surrounded by Russian officers, but in no less a way than we're surrounded by record company officials when we come to America. **SPIN: I read in your press clippings that someone in the group said that you weren't able to speak with people in the street.** Hassan: No, people could speak with us, but after they talked to us they were taken away and, well, interrogated is a strong word, they were debriefed, and asked what they'd been talking about. We were followed everywhere. There certainly is infringing on people's rights. Brown: Yeah, it could be interpreted as that, but it also could be interpreted just like we're always being taken around by someone from the record company here.

God love the Old Left, it never dies, nor even fades away.



Simon & Garfunkel:  
Bridging Troubled Waters?



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FLASH





# ZULU SON

**Famed for his Friday and Saturday night hip hop jams on New York's Kiss FM, Red Alert is more than just a DJ. He's a cultural presence in the spirit of Afrika Bambaata.**

Article by Ben Mapp



It's two minutes to 9:00 in KISS FM's control room and the cart's already rolling. After a minute or so of sound effects, the taped voice starts the countdown: "10 ... 9 ... 8 ...," more crazy noise, "3 ... 2 ... 1," then the intro—"Kool DJ Red Alert goes berzerk."

Red lets go of Doug E. Fresh's "The Show" on turntable 1, cues up another copy on turntable 2, and dices n'slices it before segueing into Run-D.M.C.'s "Together Forever," cutting it up like a surgeon at an operating table. For four hours, the slight, red-haired native New Yorker bops behind his personal console, selecting his favorite hip hop tracks, talking on-air with host/engineer Johnny Allen (subbing for Jeff Fox, "The Fox Who Rocks the Box") about old-time DJs and hip hop nightclubs. It's his last show of the 80s, and Red Alert isn't missing a dopebeat: he's dropping some hard science on the history of hip hop.

Which is fitting at the end of a decade that saw hip-hop rise from underground clubs to Yo! MTV Raps. A lot of people say that hip hop is 10 years old, but Red Alert recalls going to Bronx clubs and high school jams almost 20 years ago to catch Kool Herc mixing beats and pieces from Hendrix, K.C. and the Sunshine Band, and others to move the crowd. The parties were promoted by word of mouth and have become part of hip hop lore, because, as Red recalls, "When Kool Herc was playing, the house was packed."

Afrika Bambaata was another DJ ancestor that had a big influence on Red Alert. In the late 70s, Red joined 'Bam's Zulu Nation and teamed up with him and cousin Jazzy Jay to form the group The Jazzy Five. "I was more like the disco person, 'Bam was The Master of Records and Jazzy was the flashy person," says Red. Years later, the Zulu Nation started doing parties downtown at clubs like the Roxy, where in 1983, Red says, hip hop broke to a much wider audience. At the Roxy and on "Zulu Beats," a now defunct radio show, "Bam showed that he could combine rap, new wave, funk, rock'n'roll, old disco, disco, reggae,

calypso ... I feel he had one of the widest audiences ever because he blended everything in."

When Red started his Friday and Saturday night radio show seven years ago, he took that lesson in versatility and put his own stamp on it. When other New York radio jocks would play reggae, for example, he'd play four or five cuts a show. Now he plays up to 60 minutes of straight-up dancehall to kick off his four hours. "A lot of people say I'm becoming more cultural with the records I'm playing," Red says of his diverse musical selection.

He doesn't really think about it that way. Once a week he goes to the studio, listens to all his new records, and makes a decision about what he'll spin. "A lot of people try to lean on me and say 'Give my record a shot.' I tell 'em, 'The name of the game is to make me move. If it doesn't, it might make someone else move.' If that doesn't happen, maybe that'll make them do better next time."

Rappers that make Red Alert move include Boogie Down Productions, The Jungle Brothers, De La Soul, Queen Latifah, Monie Love, A Tribe Called Quest and Chill Rob G. They're all down with his company Red Alert Productions, which has a production arm that includes the JB's, DJ Mark the 45 King, Soul Shock and Cut Father from Denmark, and Major Force Posse from Japan. Red describes R.A.P. as "a unit that's out to entertain you and to guide you," clearly following along the lines of 'Bam's Zulu Nation, which spawned rappers and DJs that remain a force in hip hop.

As organizer of R.A.P., Red's been busy: his latest project was executive producing The Jungle Brothers' second album *Done By the Forces of Nature* (Warner). "The two rappers (in the JB's) are my cousins and the DJ's my nephew," he says matter-of-factly. Trying not to overstate the case, he says, "the album speaks for itself," but like every R.A.P. project, it has one goal: "We want people to see that when we rock you, we're giving you the lead off to guide you into your own culture, your own awareness, your own future."

Photography by Michael Lavine

# AMERICA'S POP HERO.



TASTES GREAT.



Their enthusiasm undimmed, Midnight Oil have returned from inside Australia realizing they're not going to change the world overnight. But they're used to taking the long, dusty road. *Blue Sky Mining* makes a strong commitment to issues.

Article by John O'Donnell

**R**ob Hirst, drummer with Midnight Oil, has to laugh. What else can he do? It's the middle of 1988, and Hirst and the Oils have spent two grueling years trying to understand and articulate the plight of the Australian Aboriginal—the shameless way in which a race has been dispossessed of its land and its culture. With so much ground traveled, so much time invested and, one expects, a certain pride in the band's achievements, Hirst has just been dealt a comic-tragic blow.

While in New York, where Midnight Oil is due to perform at the Ritz, Hirst is recognized and stopped on the street by a black guy, who says, "Hey you're in a band, right? I love that song of yours, the one about hot sex." Hirst looks puzzled, sex being somewhat outside of the band's normal agenda. "Yeah, that's it, 'Beds are Burning,'" his new-found friend remembers excitedly. Hirst recounted this incident in January in the plush Rhinoceros recording studios, in Sydney, Australia, where the band was recording their latest missive, *Blue Sky Mining*. One senses, as he speaks, that making the album has left a mark on the band that's as indelible as the critical raves and platinum sales the band received for their album *Diesel and Dust* and for the song "Beds Are Burning" (which in fact deals with returning Australia to its rightful owners, the Aborigines).

For while Midnight Oil's enthusiasm and commitment is far from diminishing—if anything *Blue Sky Mining* marks a stronger commitment to issues than ever before—the band realizes that they're not going to change the world overnight. "It was a real surprise for the Oils finally to get a record to sell in America," Midnight Oil's imposing, bald lead singer Peter Garrett admits. "Particularly one that deals in large part with Aboriginal land rights. We've only just managed to pick our jaws up off the ground.

"Ultimately, we know that, like, when we play live, some people go to get off and some people go to get into it. [In the US], the people who want to get into it probably picked up what we were dealing with. And the fact that they have treated the American Indians pretty savagely was a reasonable parallel. We took an American Indian (Graffiti) and an Aboriginal band



## OIL BURNS IN THE OUTBACK

(Yothu Yindi) with us when we did the major *Diesel* tour, so I think it probably would have been difficult to leave the concert, unless you'd completely rendered your brain cells irrelevant, without knowing what was going on."

"I think the band has learned that you work toward things gradually," says Hirst. "You set your goals, and down the track sometime—sometime when you least expect it—you reach them."

**M**idnight Oil has never made life easy for itself; it's always taken the long, dusty track. With roots that extend as far back as 1971, when guitar/keyboard whiz Jim Moginie and drummer, Rob Hirst, the two major musical forces in the group, began playing together, Midnight Oil emerged out of

Sydney's northern beach suburbs in 1977 with a hard-line non-conformist manifesto.

Initially, the band's aims were to maximize time for surfing, to pledge undying allegiance to its fans, and to remain as detached as possible from the machinations of the music industry. Their first two albums, 1978's *Midnight Oil* and 79's *Head Injuries*, documented these ideals with a fierce, reckless rock'n'roll backbeat. Midnight Oil established itself with frenetically intense live performances. With punkish aggression, the band pushed for an edge whenever it performed, as though the moment was the only thing that mattered. Peter Garrett's six-foot-five, Chinese-spastic dancing frame and strangled vocals were the focus of the most dynamic act on the fertile Sydney pub scene that was then seeing the rise of

INXS and local heroes Cold Chisel and Mental As Anything.

If Garrett was the focus, the power-riffing guitars of Jim Moginie and Martin Rotsey and the dynamic rhythm section of Keith Moon disciple Rob Hirst and bass player Andrew James (the band's bassist is now Bones Hillman) were constantly pushing him to greater heights. Midnight Oil performances quickly became the stuff of legend and earned the band a large and fiercely loyal following.

Meanwhile, the band had established its own record label, Powderworks, drawn up its own contracts and generally established a stance and profile that was outside of, and angered, the local music scene. Garrett, a lawyer, began to vent his feelings on a broad range of political issues onstage, and various political causes, such as Greenpeace and the Nuclear Disarmament Party, began to ask the band for support.

Midnight Oil developed a conscience to match its attitude. Its next album, *Place Without A Postcard*, recorded with producer Glyn Johns, attempted to define the band's concerns: the corporatization of Australian culture, the destruction of the natural environment and the spinelessness of politicians. The record, it was hoped, would establish the band

"It's one thing to be a band that writes about political things, but it's another to be people who are really scared and concerned," Garrett told a reporter when the record was released. "It's very important for us to get immediate, because we can't go on making records like this for years, and people can't go on ignoring it."

In 1984, between 10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1 and their next album *Red Sails In The Sunset*, Garrett ran for, and narrowly missed getting, a seat in the Australian Senate on a Nuclear Disarmament ticket. The campaign was supported, ideologically, by the band, but the thought of Midnight Oil going into retirement and Garrett's spending time in the Senate created strain.

The hi-tech bombast of *Red Sails*, again recorded with Nick Launay, and the band's internal frustrations brought some re-evaluation. Ultimately, the band decided to go back to the basics.

In July 1986 Midnight Oil undertook a tour that transformed and humbled them, and ultimately provided the inspiration and backbone for *Diesel and Dust*. The "Blackfella-Whitefella" tour of Aboriginal communities in remote parts of the Northern Territory, the "Dead Heart" of Australia, was designed so the

**"Cynicism is somebody else's problem—somebody else's sickness, if you like. This is the kind of band whose preoccupations have always been radically different from the preoccupations of most popular performers."**

**—Rob Hirst**

"Members of the band have traveled through Asia and the poorer countries of the world, but none of us were prepared for what we saw in the middle of our own country in 1986."

The band modified its instrumentation—a stripped down drum kit, acoustic guitars, only a few amps—for the tour, but it was still far too loud and alien for the local communities. Initially, the audiences preferred the Warumpi Band, which consisted of two white and three Aboriginal members, who accompanied the Oils throughout the Territory. Midnight Oil had to learn to tune into the experiences and people around them and assume the ambience of the geography into their music before the locals were moved.

"We realized when we got out there that the usual set we would play, which is flat chat, just didn't work," explains Moginie. "The first few nights we spent revving it up and then we realized that to get to people sometimes it's better to whisper, to use another way. When we started to play quietly people would move up to the front to hear. We learned a bit of seduction."

"You can be too clever sometimes," Garrett adds. "That's when music gets off the rails and why punk happened the way it did. We're probably as capable as anybody else of disappearing up our own guitar plectrum, but I think with *Diesel*, having been out in the bush and having spent time with people who've been living a lot longer than anybody else with a lot less and doing reasonably well by it, we saw that things could be simple and spare and really effective."

The experience was a rebirthing for the band. Shocked by what confronted them in the desert and having assimilated the relaxed rhythms of that environment into their tunes, they returned to Sydney and recorded *Diesel And Dust*. The lyrics reflected the way the three main lyricists (Hirst: "Beds Are Burning" and "Bulldozer"; Moginie: "Warra Kurna"; Garrett: "Dead Heart") perceived the journey. And where, previously, they may have rocked out or over-arranged their songs, they held back, as evidenced by the hypnotic pulsing of "Beds Are Burning," the rollicking acoustic strum of "Dead Heart" and the subtle, whispered "Put Down That Weapon."

"It's not like that at all," says Peter Garrett when it's suggested that Midnight Oil may be seen as a bunch of blokes playing tunes in support of his political musings. Garrett's in The Office, the large, busy terrace building in the comfortable inner-city Sydney of Glebe, which serves as Midnight Oil's business headquarters. He's taken time out from his hectic schedule as the president of the Australian Conservation Foundation to discuss Midnight Oil and *Blue Sky Mining*.

"I think it's really important for people to know that there's more to Midnight Oil than a moving head, a stream-of-consciousness, state-of-the-world, horror, shock, let's-do-something-about-it sort of frontperson. I mean that's part of what the Oils is, but there's also the songwriting that comes from the other guys and the music they play. It's just that they've never really wanted to talk a great deal to media, they've got better things to do probably."

Moginie's quotations earlier in this article are some of the few ever given to the press, Garrett and the garrulous Hirst more often being spokesmen for the band. Guitarist Martin Rotsey, new bass player Bones Hillman and Moginie rarely involve themselves with the media, yet it's by their choice and it appears that

*Continued on page 145*



overseas, but CBS Records balked, saying the album was "far too Australian."

The initial breakthrough overseas came with 1982's 10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1, which featured heavily politicized lyrics, its main theme being anti-nuclear, "we affectionately call it the 'Bomb' album," laughs Hirst, and a production that placed the band's twin electric guitar and monster drum sound into an ultra-contemporary frame. In Australia, the band was at the height of its popularity. The album sold more than 200,000 copies and the band was playing to large, sold-out houses every night.

"We made 10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1 devoid of any considerations about playing it live," remembers Garrett. "We just took things as far as they would go in the studio without worrying about the way it would come out. We were also working with someone [Nick Launay] who was pretty open to ideas, and the result was more variation and more mood."

"When we were making the record, in England, the distance made more obvious than ever the danger our country was in; and, because we love Australia, we realized we had to go further than we had before with our lyrics. It became obvious that we all had to address the issue of nuclear disarmament, because they were and still are desperate times."

band could live and breathe in the endless, parched and desperately inhospitable deserts of inland Australia. They wanted to soak up the essence of the real Australia, and to see first hand the cultural rape the white man had dealt the Australian Aborigine.

The Territory is an environment that would make Mad Max melt, a world of thousands of miles of dirt roads, of temperatures that range from a shadeless 115 degrees during the day to an icy 35 degrees at night, of native communities torn from their tribal land and living in tin shed towns, but somehow still possessing a spirit and attachment to the land.

For Midnight Oil, a group that had always emphasized its Australianness and employed Outback themes in its music, the tour proved a watershed. "We were there for only a month and a half, but the memory of that time has lived with us," says Hirst. "I came away from it saddened and ashamed. It's not the sort of place I would hurry back to, I don't enjoy seeing people live in those conditions. There's people out there living under car doors and corrugated iron. There are people whose diet consists of unfiltered Camels and Coca-Cola. Kids that have been damaged by petrol sniffing or the effects of alcohol on communities. I don't want to see a proud race belittled and herded into settlements in the desert."





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## MUSIC THE ARMY WOULDN'T PLAY FOR NORIEGA

*He'd Still Be In The Vatican Embassy Listening—It's That Good!*

PANAMA CITY, Panama—U.S. troops blasted rock 'round the clock to drive Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega out of his refuge. But a high-ranking official admitted today that certain music was prohibited for fear the strongman would like it so much, he'd remain in the embassy for months. Now, in an *RCA Records* exclusive, here are the top artists on the Pentagon's list:

### COWBOY JUNKIES

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**PETER MURPHY CUTS "DEEP."**



**MICHAEL PENN THE ACCLAIM IS NO MYTH.**

LOS ANGELES, California—*The New York Times* said Michael Penn's debut album "... recalls the Beatles' psychedelic period as strongly as any pop music recorded in this decade." *L.A. Times Syndicate* called him "a talent who will be with us for some time to come." That's no myth. "March" features the hit single, "No Myth," plus "This & That" and "Brave New World."

**"SOMEDAY WE'LL BRAG ABOUT (THEM) TO OUR GRANDCHILDREN. THEY'RE THAT GOOD!" SAYS MUSICIAN OF THE SILOS LAST ALBUM.**



NEW YORK, NY—This band's called The Silos. But we're not talking wheat. We're not talking nuclear. One listen to their new album "The Silos" and there'll be no doubt in your mind what these Silos hold. It features "Here's To You" and "(We'll Go) Out Of Town."



**TORONTO, Canada**—Cowboy Junkies follow-up "The Trinity Session" with their eagerly-awaited new album. "The Caution Horses" features "Sun Comes Up, It's Tuesday Morning," "Powderfinger" and "Rock And Bird." Produced by Peter Moore and Michael Timmins.

**LONDON, England**—There's just one word for the former lead singer of Bauhaus, "Deep." It's his brilliant new album featuring the hit single "Cuts You Up," plus "The Line Between The Devil's Teeth," and "A Strange Kind Of Love." This album takes you into a vibrating new world of shadow and substance. Now that's deep. And now he's touring in March. Don't miss him live.

## THE STONE ROSES ...A MIND-TRIP WORTH TAKING.

**MANCHESTER, England**—Britain's Breakthrough Band of 1989 are now exploding in the U.S. "The Stone Roses" includes "I Wanna Be Adored," "She Bangs The Drums" and "Fools Gold," and was voted album of the year by Britain's *Sounds*, *Melody Maker* and *NME*. It features captivating power pop melodies and bright flashes of '60s psychedelia. Incense not included.



## GRAHAM PARKER AND THE PRIMITIVES TO TOUR NATIONALLY!

**NEW YORK**—Britain's original Angry Young Man hits the road starting March 1, with Dave Edmunds' Rock 'N Roll Revue. His new album "Human Soul" scrutinizes everything from the American media ("Big Man On Paper") to AIDS ("Green Monkeys").

Catch The Primitives on tour now with The Sugarcubes. Their latest album is "Pure," featuring "Sick Of It."

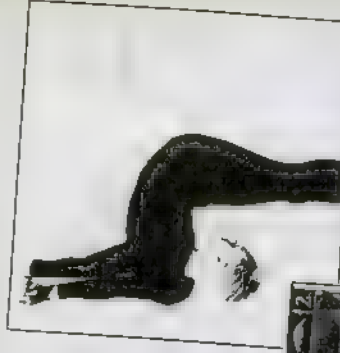


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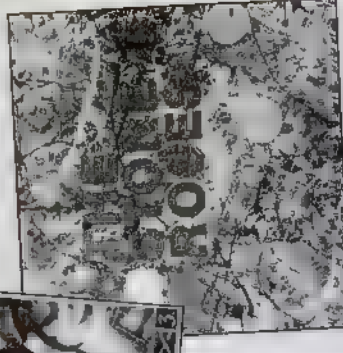
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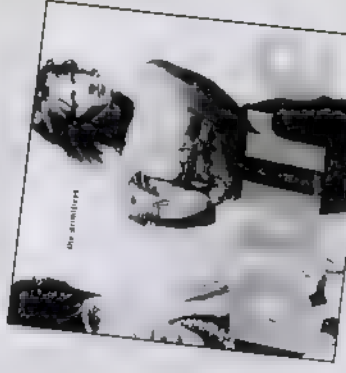
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**Hounded by the FBI and acclaimed as the new, new Sex Pistols, NWA's rise has been rapid and sensational. But now that chief spokesman and lyricist Ice Cube has left the band, has the soul and intelligence of these Niggers With Attitude gone with him?**

# HANGING TOUGH

Article by Frank Owen

**T**he numbers alone are impressive. Both NWA's *Straight Outta Compton* and NWA member Eazy E's solo album *Eazy-Duz-It* have sold over one and a half million units each without radio play, MTV support or major record company promotion.

Equally impressive is the \$650,000 that NWA grossed on tour last year, of which manager Jerry Heller took \$130,000. Ice Cube, meanwhile, whom many regard as the group's chief spokesman, went home with \$23,000. When Ice Cube asked about profits from NWA merchandise being sold on the tour he was told it was none of his business. That was about par for the course, according to the man who either wrote or co-wrote approximately half of the raps on the Eazy E and NWA albums. This significant contribution to over three million records sold has so far earned Ice Cube \$32,000.

Now that the disgruntled rapper has left the band, the question arises, has the soul and intelligence of NWA walked out of the door with him?

## **SPIN: Why did you leave NWA?**

Cube. Financial reasons, man. I wasn't getting paid. When you contribute to the sale of three million albums, you expect more than \$32,000. Jerry Heller [NWA manager] lives in a half million-dollar house in West Lake, and I'm still living at home with my mother. Jerry's driving a Corvette and a Mercedes

Benz and I've got a Suzuki Side Kick. You know what I mean, Jerry's making all the money, and I'm not. Jerry has no creative input into the group, he just makes all the fucked-up decisions and gets all the fucking money.

## **What do you mean "fucked-up decisions"?**

Like refusing to do the Jesse Jackson chat show because there was no money involved. Jesse Jackson wanted to do an interview with NWA for his new show "Voices Of America." The topic of the show was the controversial music that kids are listening to today. There's no way on this planet that NWA shouldn't have been on that show. With the exception of Public Enemy, there's no group more controversial than NWA. We should have been on that show, getting nationwide exposure and getting people on our side.

When you turn down something like that, you've gotta think that the man doesn't want it for the group. He's just in it for the short term so that he can make as much money as quickly as possible.

**Jerry told me that one of the reasons you left NWA was that your publicist, Pat Charbonet, was filling your head with notions that you were a big star and you would be even bigger on your own.**

The only thing Pat Charbonet told me was to get a lawyer. They got mad when I did that. Jerry told me that lawyers were made to cause trouble. But lawyers only cause trouble if there's trouble to cause.

## **What about the future?**

I'm doing a solo album with Priority Records. [Public Enemy's] Chuck D and [PE producer] Hank Shocklee are going to produce it. It's going to be called *America's Most Wanted*. There's gonna be tracks like "Endangered Species." Young black teenagers have now been added to the endangered species list.

There's another track called "Turn Off The Radio," which is about how black radio still doesn't play a fair share of hip hop. NWA has gone platinum with little help from black radio. That song is telling kids, 'be your own programmer—turn off the radio and make your own tapes.'

**I was talking to Luke Skywalker [of The 2 Live Crew] recently about the media's moral panic about supposedly obscene rap lyrics. He said that as long as hip hop remains solely a black thing, it could be as dirty as it wanted: it's only when white kids start ape-ing black styles that the authorities get concerned.**

Yeah! It's like with the gang problem in Los Angeles. As long as the gangs stay in South Central Los Angeles, the authorities don't mind. But when they

Photography by Dorothy Low





move into Beverly Hills and Westwood—that's when it's a problem, that's when the authorities kick in, that's when the police come down to South Central and harass every black man in a T-shirt.

"We tried to settle this dispute diligently," says Ice Cube's lawyer, Michael Ashburn. "We bent over backwards to try and make a financial agreement that was acceptable to both sides. I was surprised how indifferent they were when it came to settling this dispute. It was like Jerry Heller didn't care whether Ice Cube—someone who unarguably had made a major contribution to the group—left or stayed. Ice Cube would still be with NWA if our very reasonable financial demands had been met. They gave us a statement showing that Ice Cube had been advanced \$32,700. He's owed at least another \$120,000, plus his publishing royalties, which he hasn't received a cent on so far. Ice Cube wanted to continue with NWA, but he just wasn't getting paid."

"Jerry Heller says I encouraged Ice Cube to leave NWA," says publicist Pat Charbonet. "That's the first time I've been accused of inciting slaves to riot."

"The real reason that Ice Cube left NWA was that he was incredibly jealous of the notoriety and success of Eazy E," says Jerry Heller. "He wanted to be Eazy E. He was jealous because not only is Eazy a key member of NWA with a successful solo career, he's also the president of his own record company. Eazy E is a major star and a successful businessman. Ice Cube isn't."

A white-haired music biz veteran with an abrasive manner, Jerry Heller is an unlikely choice as the manager of a hip-hop group. In his heyday he ran Heller For Show, a booking agency that handled tours by top acts such as Elton John, Pink Floyd, REO Speedwagon, and ELO. By the 80s his star was in decline.

In October of 1987 he met Eazy E, a former drug dealer with bags of cash and two very talented friends—Dr. Dre and Yella—who would become the NWA production team. Together they set up Ruthless Records and scored a big pop hit with the corny electro hip hop jam "Supersonic" by JJ Fad—released on the associated label Dream Team. Heller tells the story of how, on receipt of a six-figure check from Atlantic (the major record company that licensed the song from Ruthless), he took Eazy to the bank and taught him how to open a checking account.

Today, Ruthless is living largely, as one of the most successful hip hop companies around, with a roster that includes (as well as NWA and Eazy) such new signings as Above The Law ("They're pimps and players," says Eazy, "rolling and clocking ho's"); New York female rappers Bitches With Problems ("They make NWA look like the Mormon Tabernacle Choir," jokes Jerry Heller); R&B Diva, Michel'le ("She talks like a five year old and sings like a thirteen year old," says Eazy), and The D.O.C., whose rapping career is undiminished by a recent car accident in which he flew through the back window and crushed his vocal chords.

"We've got the makings of a company that's going to be to the 90s what Berry Gordy's Motown was to the 60s," says Jerry Heller. "And the creative nucleus is Dr. Dre, Yella and Eazy."

It's difficult to imagine Eazy E behind the trigger of an AK-47. A slight figure with processed hair and the brattish demeanor of someone to whom success has

come too quickly, Eazy is inevitably described as an angry young black man from the ghetto. But in reality Eazy is the type of guy who only really gets mad when someone messes with his jheri curl. Public Enemy's Chuck D tells a story about being on tour with NWA in Chicago where Eazy refused to leave the hotel room in case his hair got wet.

Fellow Los Angeles rapper Ice-T tells a joke about what he imagines an NWA recording session is like—Ice Cube in the corner scribbling down lyrics while Eazy chides him, "Make me sound tougher. You're not making me sound tough enough."

## **Because you got a beeper, a little gold and a nice car, the police figure you're a drug dealer or a gang member.**

**Is the departure of Ice Cube a big loss to the band?**

Eazy: No, it means we get more money.

**How would you assess his contribution to NWA?**

No comment

**Well, Ice Cube has got comments. He says he wasn't getting paid. He says that you and Jerry got all the money.**

On to the next subject

**Let's talk about "Fuck Tha Police." Did you follow what was going on in Boston in January, where Chuck Stuart apparently murdered his wife and blamed it on a black mugger and everyone believed him? Is that what you meant on "Fuck Tha Police"?**

No, I don't know nothing about all that. We were just talking about what happens to us in Compton.

**But racism isn't something that just happens in Compton.**

The black police in Compton are worse than the white police. Chuck D gets involved in all that black stuff, we don't. Fuck that black power shit: we don't give a fuck. Free South Africa: we don't give a fuck. I bet there ain't anybody in South Africa wearing a button saying "Free Compton" or "Free California." They don't give a damn about us, so why should we give a damn about them? We're not into politics at all. We're just saying what other people are afraid to say.

**Tell me about the FBI letter accusing you of advocating violence against the police.**

It was juice. We liked it.

**Do you think it could hurt your career?**

What are they gonna do? Put us in jail for making a record?

**Did you get hassled by the police growing up in Compton?**

Every day. They stereotype you and mess with you because you got a beeper, a little gold and a nice car. They figure you're a drug dealer or gang member

**Some people say that NWA glamorize black-on-black crime.**

So what? They can say what the fuck they like. We're not telling anybody to join a gang or do drive-by shootings or to rob, steal and kill. We're just telling how it is in Compton.

**Other people say you disrespect women.**

We're not disrespecting women, we're disrespecting bitches.

**What's the difference between a bitch and a woman?**

A woman is a woman. A bitch is someone who carries herself in a stuck-up way. A bitch is someone who fucks everybody except me.

At the start of the interview, I presumed that Eazy E's laconic, don't-give-a-shit manner was merely a case of the rapper playing a game of pin-the-tale-on-the-honky. By the end of our session, I realized that with the departure of Ice Cube, NWA's collective IQ now barely makes it above room temperature.

But this is part of NWA's appeal for some Funkenklein of Red Alert Productions—a man whose opinions I normally trust implicitly—sees NWA as a welcome reaction against "all that righteous, political bullshit in hip hop at the moment. They don't give a fuck. And that's why they're cool."


Attempting to explain the differences between the more cultural type of hip hop you get in New York and what passes for rap music in Los Angeles, Greg Sadow—music critic of *Entertainment Weekly* and a strong supporter of the band—explains: "They're two completely different societies. Try and find a credible black leader in Los Angeles. Even an Al Sharpton. Everything that happens in Los Angeles happens in a vacuum. There's no political consciousness being developed, because there's little community activism."

There's no doubt that Compton is a violent, troubled neighborhood, but from the outside, despite the gangs and drugs, it looks surprisingly bourgeois. "It doesn't look like Germany after World War II," says Jerry Heller. "It's all houses with nice little lawns."

Last year, Ice Cube's comfortable, middle-class home was fired on in a drive-by shooting: the bullets were supposedly meant for a neighbor's house. And Jerry Heller tells a story about signing a Compton rapper called E Rock on a Friday, who by Sunday had been shot dead. And Michel'le, on a recent visit to the hairdresser, was held up at gunpoint, her car hijacked, and her money stolen in broad daylight.

There's been a lot of nonsense written in the media about NWA and their neighborhood. Typical was a piece in a recent edition of *Option* which talked about the band's "threat to middle-class ideology" and the way they provide "a glimpse into the conditions of the inner-city, where poor or non-existent housing and little legal economic advancement have led people to extreme means."

There is an element of documentary realism about NWA's music, but that is largely overshadowed by the gleeful delight the band takes in demonstrating their supposed toughness. In reality, NWA have more in common with a Charles Bronson movie than a PBS documentary on the plight of the inner-cities.

The media myth that US crime is black is peddled daily in newsprint and nightly on the networks. Sadly, it's a myth that NWA do little to dispel. Niggers With Attitude? Niggers With Activator, more like. 





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# The 10 MOST INTERESTING MUSICIANS OF THE LAST 5 YEARS

**PRINCE** In the years following *Purple Rain*, a number of black bands moved to Minneapolis to launch careers. Why not? The movie made it look like a Black Rock Coalition rendering of Mecca. Almost without exception, these bands moved out.

The thriving, racially-mixed scene Prince portrayed in *Purple Rain* was something he made up. It had nothing to do with Minneapolis, which has a relatively small black population, but it had everything to do with the emotional reality of growing up black, talented and ambitious in Minneapolis.

Starting as a stranger in his own hometown, Prince invented a polyglot, multiracial community in his mind; "Uptown" (from *Dirty Mind*) was its anthem. He then reinvented himself as the high priest of Uptown, freak flag flown high. It involved calculated fictions, as his detractors always claimed.

The self-mythologizing reached its apotheosis with "Purple Rain" the movie, which Prince called his "emotional autobiography." It was a staggering feat, both as music and as rock careerism. The radio never sounded better in the 80s than in the summer bracketed by "When Doves Cry" and "Let's Go Crazy." But *Purple Rain* also proved how perilously alone Prince was. On his subsequent tour, Prince seemed petrified onstage and off.

At any rate, *Purple Rain* certainly had the effect of isolating him even further. In the next two years he made some fine music, but he also acted out a basic confusion about *which* took precedence, the music or the cult of personality. The self-obsession reached an embarrassing crescendo in 1986 with "Under the Cherry Moon," a bad movie made worse by being so heartfelt on some level.

If the self-mythologizing became more circumspect after that, the pace at which Prince reinvented himself musically redoubled. Each record was radically different from the last.

Of them all, *Parade* was the only post-*Purple Rain* album to elaborate on musical ideas from its predecessor. Otherwise, the cardinal rule was change. It made Prince the most intriguing figure in rock, not to mention the most maddening. Prince's approach favored revolution over evolution, and solitary composition over collaboration. All through the latter half of the 80s, he hit big or he missed big.

Prince's most exciting strides in the second half of the 80s came as a live performer and band leader, not in the studio. The *Sign O' the Times* and *Lovesexy* tours were amazing spectacles, both musically and visually. Lacking contemporaries who could challenge him creatively, he put together a band that kept him honest, and he shared some of his finest moments with them.

Sex may be Prince's best-known obsession, but it's always gone hand in hand with a longing for larger connections. Images like Uptown, Paisley Park, and the New Power Generation are all attempts to imagine communities where he's at once a member, a prophet, and a benevolent dictator. What he crafted onstage with the *Lovesexy* band is as close as he'd ever come to realizing it, and confronting its contradictions. That tour gave a breadth and depth to his music that it never suggested so clearly before.

For someone who used to seem determined to usher in the Apocalypse or wear out his dancing shoes trying, that's a mark of growth. So what now? Well, if part of his problem in the 80s was a lack of creative stimulation from his peers, that should change in the 90s as pop struggles to integrate the profound innovations of hip hop. All that may not matter if he holes up in Paisley Park, but if he's willing to walk through the door he opened on the *Lovesexy* tour, his best work is still ahead of him.

—Steve Perry

# MADONNA

A little bit of history detaches itself from the rest and floats to the ground with Madonna on it, breasts thrust at camera, index finger tucked into her mouth. Madonna looks the way Ronnie Spector sounded: sexy, hungry, totally trashy. Beneath her white dress is a basic, no frills, nylon bustier customized with lace. Inside her bellybutton is a tiny pool of sweat.

**MADONNA CLAWS HER WAY TO THE TOP**—Madonna's nails are relatively short for a rising star. The cuticles are manicured and the moons round and full beneath the fire engine red polish. The pointed tips look like they haven't been bitten in quite a while.

**MADONNA SLEEPS HER WAY TO THE TOP**—Madonna sleeps best on her side. The mattress is empress-size. Madonna dreams about Nancy Sinatra: white go-go boots, miniskirt and fake eyelashes. Madonna awakes surrounded by a ring of flames. Madonna flees building, nightgown on fire.

**MADONNA ATTACKED BY PAPARAZZO**—Madonna wrestles paparazzo to ground. She wrestles the way Brigitte Bardot looked in "Contempt": hair blonder, bra pointier. Madonna gets paparazzo into hammer-hold. Time: three minutes, 17 seconds.

**MADONNA CALLED A TRAMP, A SLUT AND "THE KIND OF GIRL WHO ALWAYS ENDS UP IN THE BACK SEAT OF A CAB"**—

Madonna runs red light while talking to Sean on car phone. Madonna driving a white-and-coral 56 T-bird convertible. Madonna pulls up to Musso & Frank's in midnight blue Mercedes sports coupe. Madonna slides into back booth and orders salad chiffonade with lots of garlic.

**MADONNA AND SEAN TO WED**—Madonna jumps up and down on bed in hotel room in Tennessee while Sean proposes. Madonna and Sean later that day in 7-Eleven, buying jaw-breakers. Swarm of helicopters whirr above.

**MADONNA BOUND AND GAGGED**—Madonna roughed up by Sean. Madonna's head thrust into oven (Kenmore, self-cleaning). Madonna hogtied with leather straps. Madonna trussed up like a turkey. Madonna mum.

**MADONNA: "WE WERE LIKE TWO FIRES RUBBING UP AGAINST EACH OTHER"**

**SEAN GETS 60 DAYS IN PEN**—Sean ordered by police to come out with hands up. Sean in nightclub knocks a songwriter he thought had been trying to kiss Madonna down from a chair. Sean punches extra during the filming of "Colors." Sean denies having dated stripper. Sean warns Madonna: "Do anything you want, just never make a film with Warren Beatty."

**MADONNA BRAGS: "I'LL BAG BEATTY"**—Madonna sits on co-star Warren Beatty's lap at Freddie DeMann's birthday party. Madonna never gets up.

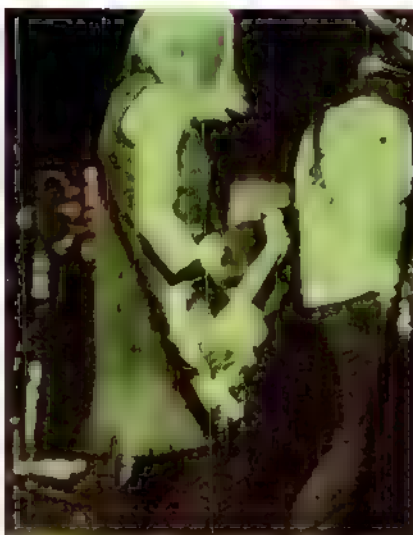
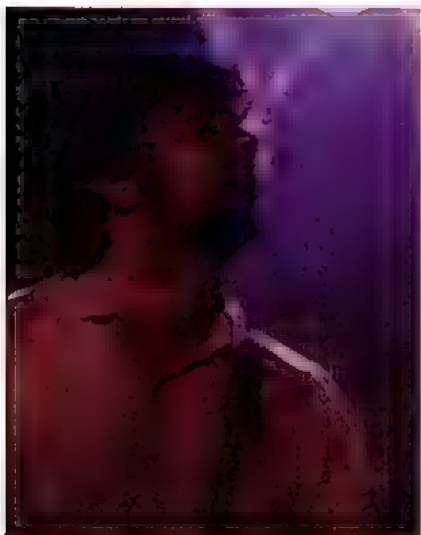
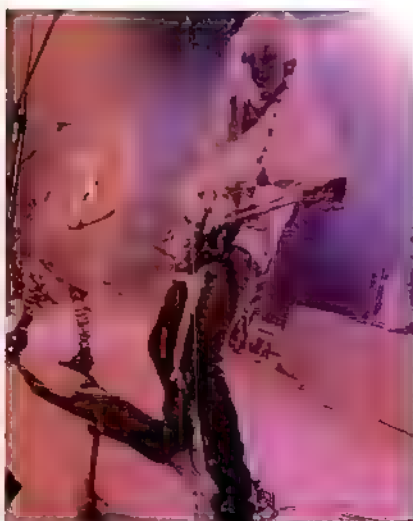
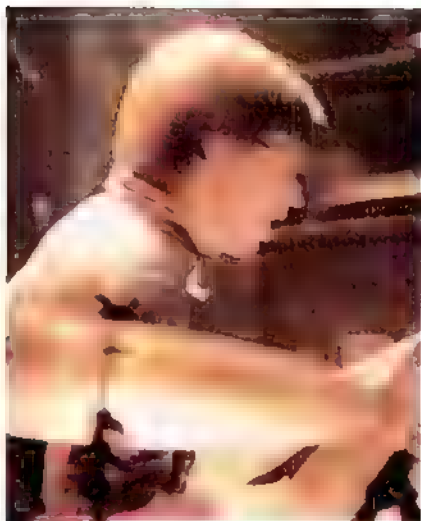
**"THEY THOUGHT I WAS THE FLAVOR OF THE MONTH"**—Madonna tells reporter, "They thought they'd wake up one day and I'd go away. . . ." Madonna pauses, glances at her reflection in the tabletop. ". . . But I'm not going to go away."

**BOY TOY SEEKS SOY JOY**—Madonna, the most famous woman in the world, illuminated by refrigerator light during midnight snack. Outside, constellations rise in perfect order and flower petal falls to ground with a plop.

—Scott Cohen







Sonic Youth (clockwise from top left): Steve Shelley, Thurston Moore, Kim Gordon, Lee Ranaldo

## SONIC YOUTH

"We were very upset when the Berlin Wall came down," says guitarist Lee Ranaldo, leaning forward in his chair in the lobby of the SoHo recording studio where Sonic Youth are working on their new record. "It's kind of nice having another planet on your own planet," explains fellow guitarist Thurston Moore. It's kind of nice, too, having a band like Sonic Youth on your planet. Suppose they didn't exist, would you need to invent them? Probably not, which is one reason they're so cool: you would never come up with their particular musical idea.

The sonic revolution they started some eight years ago has been gathering speed slowly. Walk into any low-rent rehearsal studio these days and odds are you'll find several scraggly-haired guitarists torturing their instruments in suspiciously SY-like ways. And now they're preparing to put out a new record, their first for a major label, a "real money" record, with maybe a "real money" video to go along with it. ("I want to do an all-nude one. I want to do something like the Cher video," says Thurston.)

Don't worry that the move to Geffen will tame SY. I've heard snippets of the new stuff, and it sounds a lot like the old stuff, except maybe better. The SY experience is never going to be found on a record anyway. They are, above all, a live band. Live, the massed overtones produced by their altered tunings hover and dart above you, making you hear things that aren't really there.

Recorded, Sonic Youth may never be able to match that pure harmonic splendor, but there are compensations. Stripped of their coat-of-many-overtones, the intricate musical structures of SY's songs gleam like polished bones. Scrape off enough scuzz (what we rockcritters usually call texture) and you'll find songs underneath.

Some of the lyric themes they'll be tackling on the album: "UFOs, chicks, rock stars, the homeless, the white problem, the Jesse Jackson dilemma, the corporate rock problem, mayors on crack." Surprises in store: cameos by Chuck D (Public Enemy—a rap duet with SY bass player/singer Kim Gordon?), J. Mascis (Dinosaur Jr.), Jad Fair (Half-Japanese) and Don Fleming (B.A.L.L., Velvet Monkeys). "Tom Verlaine came by one session, too, but he didn't do anything, he just stayed for like six hours and smoked about a million filterless cigarettes and left them all over the floor," says Lee.

As we move into the 90s, we also move, I guess, into Sonic Middle-Age. We sat in their recording studio watching recent TV footage of the Rolling Stones ("Put a shirt on, dude," was Kim's advice to Mick Jagger). How they're going to handle that promises to make them at least as interesting in the next five years as in the last five.

—Jim Greer

“

It is a big apartment, and it's beautiful...you know, it's secure. People can't get in and say, 'I'm Jesus from Toronto,' and all that. That still happens.

John Lennon (SPIN/October 1988; From a previously unpublished interview)

”

### 10 BEST by Brian Cullman

**Samuel Beckett:** For understanding silence.

**Prince:** For understanding noise. And for somehow being able to turn left and turn right at the same time.

**Ennio Morricone:** Because with Nino Rota gone, who else is there?

**Cheb Khaled:** The crown prince of raï, the Wilson Pick ett of Algeria.

**Julie Cruise:** For taking the ache from the sound of long-forgotten girl groups and stretching it from here to Altoona. And for understanding the dark psycho-sexual subtexts of "Popsicles and Icicles" and "Navy Blue."

**Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan:** An ecstatic Pakistani qawwali singer who is the size of a large sofa and who can rock the house with just his voice, two harmoniums, a table, and a little help from Allah.

**Public Enemy:** Because even if you don't like them, you can't ignore them. And even if you could, why would you want to?

**Azra:** Yugoslavian power trio who seem eminently capable of re-inventing rock'n'roll.

**John Cale:** Because while everyone and his brother's been jumping up and down about Lou Reed, Cale's been quietly making some of the deepest and most powerful music of his career.

**Max Roach:** For continuing

“

If I wasn't doing what I'm doing, I would be a nun.

Madonna (May 1985,

”

66

I listen to the Germans on the beach because it gets everyone upset and makes them move away so I can have more of the beach to myself.

Flea, *The Red Hot Chili Peppers* (July/1993)

99

10 BEST by Jim Bessman

**Mick Jagger**

**Peter Himmelman:** What could possibly be more interesting than a guy who does an acoustic guitar bit with (papa-in-law) Bob Dylan for a Hasidic Jewish telethon?

**Jane Siberry:** Full of musical and lyrical surprises, she's almost impossible to describe.

**Desert Rose Band:** Specifically, bandleader Chris Hillman, one of the most commanding stage presences ever, and still a groundbreaking musician continuing the country/bluegrass/rock fusion he pioneered with The Byrds and Flying Burrito Brothers.

**Rosanne Cash:** The most important female country artist of her time, Cash is committed to motherhood, even at the expense of superstardom.

**Talk Talk:** The impressionistic British band doesn't tour, doesn't compromise artistically, and consequently doesn't sell records.

**Billy Joel:** In breaking the Soviet sound barrier, he seized the moment in progressing from brilliant irrelevance to a courageous new world vision.

**Boris Grebenshikov:** The so-called Russian Dylan forsook the Party by fighting (like none of us can ever imagine) for his right to party.

**John Cougar Mellencamp:** Grossly underestimated by many, Cougar moved from superior straight-ahead rock to superior sociopolitically committed roots rock. But he was always human, staying honest to himself and his public, even when it meant open admission of his own failings and doubts.

**Denny Oswald:** No one else has had to struggle so painfully to re-define himself artistically in the face of critical scorn.



Frank W. Odenfeldt/Outline Press

## TRACY CHAPMAN

The sudden rise of Tracy Chapman from Harvard Square busker to Elektra Records megastar contains as much irony as predictability, as much tragedy as cause for celebration. When her debut album was released in the spring of 1988, it obviously wasn't your average first album from some starlet desperately seeking fame and fortune. *Tracy Chapman* was a revolutionary social/political manifesto from an artist with much to say, and with a mind broad and bad enough to say it with style and grace. Here's the irony: Chapman's lofty, lilting, mellifluous music can put the mind in a trance, while her firm, unwavering voice paints unnerving pictures of society's ills.

Nothing new. Dylan did it. Baez did it. Pete Seeger, Joni Mitchell. All could turn harsh reality into dreamscapes, flights of fantasy into drama. The difference is context. In today's pop-music climate of intellectual vacuity, overproduced "noise" and "beats," Chapman's self-effacing style, and her willingness to address racism, materialism and domestic violence, among other social issues, were enough to project her as less a star than an icon-in-the-making. Chapman's songs are about the hurt and pain caused by faceless conglomerates, people who hide behind material things, and redemption from their hostile world. In the course of garnering overwhelming critical acclaim, and three Grammy awards, Tracy Chapman became the conscience of nations—of millions. The question is, did anyone actually hear her call?

*They're tryin' to take away my pride / By stripping me of everything I own. / They're tryin' to hurt me inside / And make me into a white man's drone.  
But this one's not for sale / And I was born to fight / I ain't been knocked down yet.*

—Tracy Chapman, "Born to Fight"

Judging by Chapman's second album, *Crossroads*, the answer is "not really." On *Crossroads*, she struggles to maintain her own integrity and inner peace amid all the superstar attention. Perhaps it was her rapid rise in the (white) pop world that made her all too aware of its fickleness—here today, she could be gone tomorrow—and that ultimately her black self is all she has.

—Ben Mapp





*Whos Gonna Save Me?*

*Midnight On  
Blue Sky Mining*

*Featuring "Blue Sky Mining" "Forgotten Love" "Badman Blues"  
On Columbia*

“

The problem with voting is that no matter who you vote for, the government always gets in.

Bono (May 1987)

”

“

Don't watch a man's dreads, watch a man's heart.

Dr. Know, Bad Brains (June 1989)

”

#### 10 BEST by Danny Fields

**Soundgarden:** *Simply the best, better than all the rest.*

**Marianne Faithfull:** *She's the most glamorous, exciting and theatrical female vocalist in the world.*

**Stone Roses:** *Perhaps the most beautiful music of any new band.*

**John Hiatt:** *Songwriting that is dazzling, artful, precise and human.*

**Tom Petty:** *AOR at its classiest and most musical.*

**Diamanda Galas:** *So intense and disturbing I haven't begun to figure out what she's doing, but it's up there.*

**Metallica:** *And Justice For All: the masterpiece of the decade.*

**Jesus and Mary Chain:** *They leave the rest of their genre in the dust, the true line of descent of the Velvet Underground.*

**Phranc:** *A folksinger for our times; she nails the things that matter with enormous humor and intelligence.*

**Alien Sex Fiend:** *Fine music, and a sense of irony that only a civilization much older and wiser than America's can turn out.*

“

Fuck society, man, it's unjust!

Fela (May 1985)

”

# TOM WAITS

I'm cleaning my apartment. It's long overdue. For weeks and weeks, dirt, grime, burnt-out matches and cat hair have clumped into dust-rats of alarming size and ferocity. But today's the day. Got a brand new Electrolux bag and a full can of Comet. Also got Tom Waits' last three albums on CD.

Tom Waits' music is good to clean to. Somehow it makes more sense to hear his garbled, megaphone groan on *Frank's Wild Years* through the *whrrrrrr, whrrrrrr!* of a vacuum cleaner; *Rain Dogs'* ghostly tales of Singapore ships and Birmingham jails through the inelegant rain of faucet water into a washpail; *Swordfishtrombones'* gruff, stomping percussion through the *sshicka sshicka sshick* of Comet against porcelain. Tom Waits' albums sound good when there's something else between them and your ears. You don't want to approach them too directly. Don't ask them straight questions, because they won't give you straight answers. They're like the shady guy at the highway truck stop who puts his arm around you while he gives you the wrong directions, just for the hell of it.

Waits' songs are forgotten dreams full of cluttered Americana: Tin Pan Alley, bastard blues, wheezy polkas, guns, \$50 bills, women in torn fishnets, eggs in frying pans. They're beautiful moments in really bad neighborhoods. It isn't songwriting, any more than Jack Kerouac's writing is "prose." Like Kerouac, Waits exists in a past that never was, a present with no future, where singers talk in rhythm and writers recite to a bebop beat. Where a person walking down a dark and empty avenue can pause under a streetlight to light a cigarette, then look up suddenly, feeling the presence of every other man or woman who has stopped under that same streetlight.

Tom Waits' music is a little mystery in a sad and beautiful world. Mysteries take time to unfold.

—Karen Schoemer



Tom Waits/Andor Feinberg



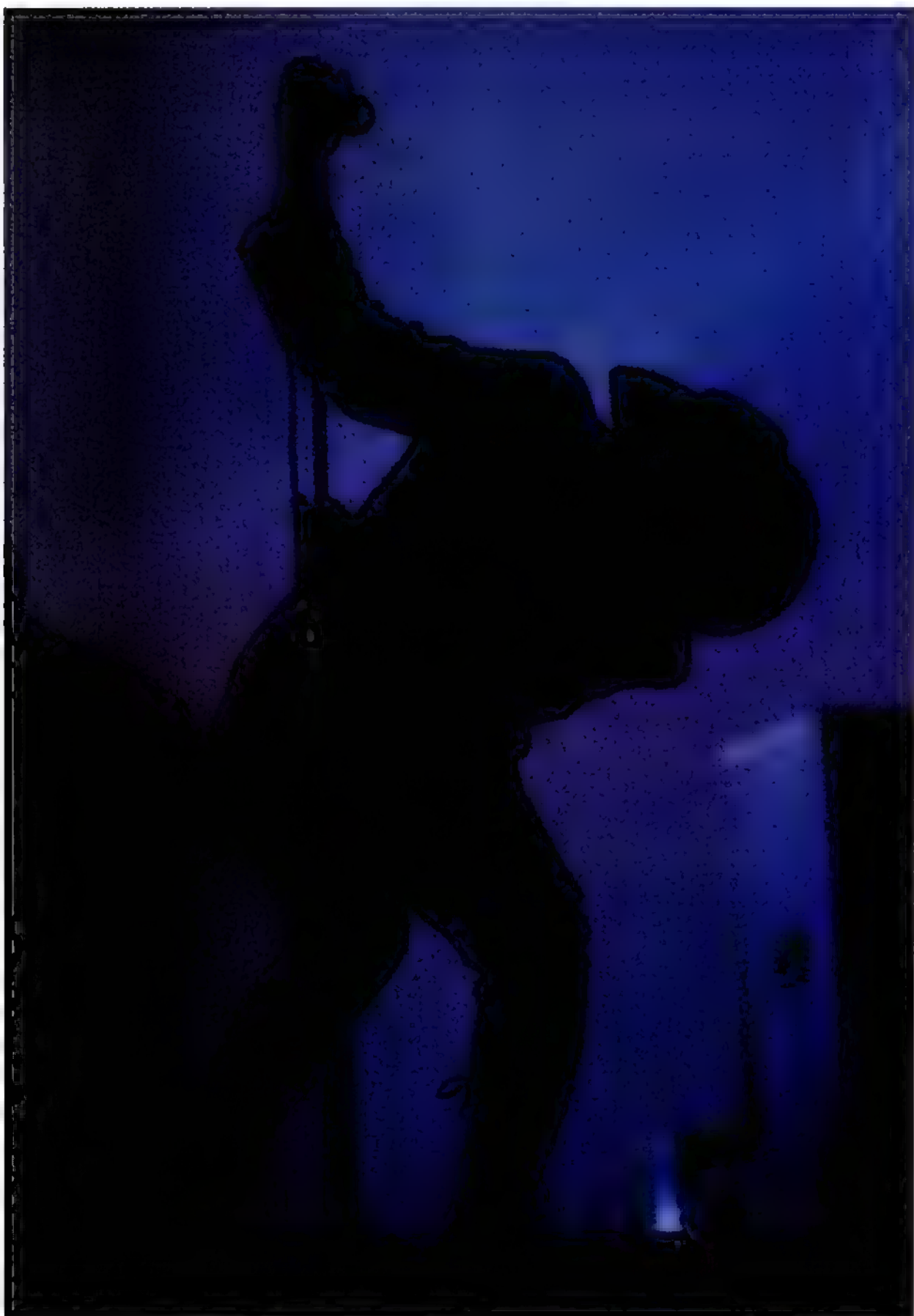


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**U2** are not glamorous. They are the polar opposite of Guns N' Roses. They don't advocate intolerance and they don't wear tattoos. They appear somber as Pennsylvania Dutchmen. They don't flaunt themselves in the current vogue of rock feminization. They don't wear scarves and hankies and they don't get lip gloss touch-ups. They project a simple masculinity. They are driven by authenticity and sworn to their idealism.

Though Dublin is their anchor and they work out of a warehouse in Ireland, America is their spiritual center. Throughout the 80s they have been mining and absorbing American musical traditions, such as gospel, blues, country and jazz. They were initially inspired by bands like Television and Patti Smith. They've developed a sensitivity to American politics and worship American cultural heroes. They've walked through Elvis's kitchen and stood at his grave. They've written "In the Name Of Love" to the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. They've engineered a blues duet with B.B. King. They are soulful. They sang in a Gospel Choir at the Greater Calvary Baptist Church in Harlem and paid tribute to the Angel of Harlem, Billie Holiday.

Collaborating with Brian Eno has given their political songs a sort of transcendence and has filled out The Edge's original, idiosyncratic sound "that is neither rhythm nor lead, but at the same time is a lot of both."

The very best of U2 can be distilled from their *tour de force* performance of *Sunday Bloody Sunday* on the day of the Enniskillen terrorist bombing that killed 11 people in Ireland. They performed as Irishmen, with anger and courage. Bono's dead-on rage, screaming and bellowing like a wounded warrior: "Where's the glory in killing? Fuck the Revolution!" was chilling to watch.

U2 closed out the decade with "Rattle And Hum," a cinematic hologram of their 1987 tour across America. Director Paul Janou shot the film in black and white silhouettes, stark backlighting and flash editing. U2 exited the 80s moving through pools of shadow and darkness, and into the light.

—Tina Lhotsky

## JIMMY JAM & TERRY LEWIS

There was a time, about five years ago, when you could identify a record written and produced by Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis just by the sound. That sound, heard on the Jam & Lewis-produced hits by Janet Jackson, Cherelle, Cheryl Lynn, Alexander O'Neal, New Edition, Force M.D.s, The Human League and the SOS Band, had a stately feel, a sensuous spread of tones from a floor-shaking bass on the bottom to bell-like tinkling on top. Practically everything was synthesized, but there was a symphonic warmth to it all, a swelling, sweeping flair. The chorus was catchy and the syncopated jack-hammer beat undeniable.

In the wake of the 4 million-plus sales of Jackson's *Control* and its many hit singles, an overwhelming slew of records aimed both at black and pop radio have imitated that Jam & Lewis sound. It's for that reason that Jam & Lewis's success cannot be measured in musical terms alone. Their primary achievement is that they took urban R&B and sold it to the white-heavy mainstream without selling their black audience short.

This is no mean feat. The pair invented the sound of 80s black radio by breaking free from Prince's domination of their former band, the Time, and from that fellow Minnesotan's eclectic, eccentric approach. Whereas Prince is an "artist" with all the ups and downs and egocentricity that the word implies, Jam and Lewis are craftsmen.

Like Motown's classic Holland-Dozier-Holland team, Jam & Lewis evoke the ambivalence of love with bold, moody strokes. Once you get beyond the obvious hooks, there's usually something disturbing, something disturbed lurking in the lyrics. Jam & Lewis can manipulate you into believing—for the duration of a single or an album—things you know aren't true. They'll convince you to think that dancing is the key to peace and equality (Jackson's "Rhythm Nation") or that infidelities give the untrue lover an appealing vulnerability (the Human League's "Human"). That persuasiveness is at the heart of the pop process. Jam & Lewis play the con-man's game with elegance, wit and winning perversity. As Janet said, it's all about control.

—Barry Walters



44

I love Guns N' Roses. But let's just say I'm glad I'm not a parent now.

Cherie Currie, ex-Runaway  
(December 1988)

99

### 10 BEST by Timothy White

**Rickie Lee Jones:** For *Flying Cowboys*, the crowning achievement of a career that reinvented the modern role of a singer-songwriter.

**Ziggy Marley:** For shunning the decadent dance hall sound.

**John Cougar Mellencamp:** For making *The Lonesome Jubilee* and *Big Daddy*, two records that championed the cause of the rural poor and homeless, while also grappling honestly and bravely with his own poverty of the spirit.

**Sting:** For rugged individualism.

**Bunny Wailer:** For releasing *Liberation*, the only reggae LP since the passing of Bob Marley that combined an elder statesman's political eloquence with a soul-piercing street humanity.

**Don Henley:** For *Building the Perfect Beast* (released late in '84) and *The End of the Innocence*.

**Shawn Colvin:** For her Northeastern club concerts, which are legendary for their spooky emotional electricity.

**David Byrne:** For *Talking Heads' Naked*, as well as his work on the soundtrack to *The Last Emperor*.

**Peter Dinklage:** For being the patron saint of world beat.

**Elvis Costello:** For retaining his status as rock'n'roll's most prolific and gifted songwriter, recognizing no bounds in his irrepressible drive to challenge himself.

44

Don't tell me you never threw a fuckin' TV set out a window.

Duff McKagan, Guns N' Roses  
(January 1989)

99

## 10 BEST by Jim Greer

**Guns N' Roses:** Or am I confusing "interesting" with "morbidly fascinating?" Still, they write some good songs and they try hard to be controversial, like a real rock group should. Sure, it's a cartoon, but I like cartoons.

**Madonna:** If not the Artist of the Decade, at least the flavor of the times. Tastes pretty good, too.

**Elvis Presley:** He's made more personal appearances than any dead person since the Virgin Mary, and his advice column in this magazine proves that his wits are as sharp as, um, ever. But we need a new Elvis movie.

**Pere Ubu:** There's was perhaps the happiest reunion of a reunion-happy half-decade.

**Anten Fier:** His recombinant ensemble, the Golden Palominos, may be a dead horse, but the idea was perhaps the only interesting development in the standard "rock group" format of the last five years.

**Led Zeppelin:** Or rather, the ghost of Led Zeppelin, hovering like a benevolent deity over the American independent rock scene.

**Bob Mould:** Watching Husker Dü disintegrate was kind of fun, but watching Bob mature into one of the best songwriters in all of rockdom was, on balance, probably even more fun.

**Prince:** Because he's insane, and because I find insane people interesting. Also because he's one of the purest talents of his time.

**Sonic Youth:** Their artfully orchestrated noise has quietly fomented a musical revolution whose end is not yet in sight.

**Public Enemy:** While I'm not a fan, it's impossible to deny the importance, even the preeminence, of this band. So I won't.

66

No, I'll not be playing bass with the Rolling Stones ever again.

Bill Wyman (March 1987)

99



Glen E. Friedman

## PUBLIC ENEMY

As we look back on the 1980s, we remember a time of turbulence in the Mid-East, the HIV Virus and of course Reaganomics. Yet within the diverse world of music, this was the decade of military mutation and radical defiance. If you could sum up the African-American rage felt at the deaths of Elenor Bumpers, Michael Stewart, and Yusef Hawkins into a musical entity of vengeance, you get two words: Public Enemy. The phenomenal thing about PE is that they bum rushed the show with fellow Def Jam colleagues like Run DMC, the Beastie Boys, and LL Cool J and still managed to exceed them all in concept and attitude. Chuck D, the lead rapper, is a dogmatic spokesman for the public, whose voice is often likened to an angry umpire calling strikes on an irresponsible government. Flavor Flav, his rapping partner, is the rebellious instigator who ad-libs on everything that Chuck says and feels. Together with scratcher Terminator X, producer Hank Shocklee, and the SIW (Security of the First World), they've managed to form the most controversial and well-known rap group in history.

The science of making a def jam—a strong bass-line accompanied by some quick razor scratches—is something that PE have perfected. What happens when a DJ like Terminator X, who speaks with his hands, is joined by a poetic, political, lyrical son like Chuck D is evident in listening to PE. As a critic, I challenge many things said by musicians, especially this group. But it's hard to challenge their anti-Semitic bullshit when their sound is so hypnotic. I often think of the story of the Pied Piper and wonder is PE's music revenge according to the legend? I wonder is the influence of PE on the children, as well as the media, helping ease racial tension or promoting sectarianism during the "Countdown to Armageddon?"

The reason that Public Enemy's records sell constantly is that they are always in conflict with the government, ethnic groups, so-called black radio and, of course, the media. The last is the biggest promotional avenue they use for their success. One of PE's most profound insights is to realize that the music industry, as much as CNN, is the media. Their objective from the word "go" was to use the media to raise hell, not sell—whence the name Public Enemy. Yet, they've become spokesmen for all black men and women who are politically active and want to raise hell—while they sell. Chuck D says that fighting the power isn't about guns and revolution and all that 60s bullshit: the best way to fight the power is by black people networking and doing business. Deep shit, right? Since the debut of these militant, mutated musicians in 1987, the PE Pied Piper has caught the ear of youth across America and is boldly going where no hip hop crew has ever gone. Wish them luck.

—Bonz Malone



# Newport Lights



***Alive with pleasure!***



**Newport pleasure comes  
to low-tar menthols**

**SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette  
Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.**

66

My shit is better than other  
people's diamonds.

Lou Reed (July 1988)

77

# 10 BEST by Cary Baker

**R.E.M.:** Consistently  
interesting.

**Lou Reed:** New York's now a  
walled city.

**Fine Young Cannibals:** No  
one sounds like Roland.

**Smiths (RIP):** Sonically  
and lyrically arresting 'til  
they became insufferable and  
combusted.

**Yo La Tengo:** Acid rock for  
the 80s/90s.

**Phranc:** Steadfastly human-  
istic and funny.

**Beogle Down Produc-  
tions:** Some walls tower of  
sounds and the nerve to re-in-  
terpret the Bible.

**Wild Seeds (RIP):** US's  
greatest rock 'n' roll band.

**Redd Kross:** Metal meets  
powerpop.

**Leany Kravitz:** Magical  
Mystery Tour redux.

**Kenny Neal:** Most interest-  
ing bluesman today.

**Camper Van Beethoven:**  
Breaks all the rules, acerbic-  
ally Hebraic postpunk  
ambrosia.

**Don Dixon:** Given too little  
credit for making incredibly  
complete, enjoyable, chock-full  
solo albums.

66

I packed the bong, the  
Buzzbee, the beer, the cat  
handcuffs, the laughing box,  
the whippet dispenser, the  
woopee cushion, the beer, the  
penis pump, the bullets, the  
Ms. Piggy double-dong,  
Extended Sexual Orgasm by a  
close friend and comrade  
John Brawer, the beer, the fur  
coats, the saw, the blue bong,  
the rope, the chisel, umm...

Mike D., Beastie Boys (March 1987)

77



## JANDEK

Even pinetops realize that  
beneath the surface of truly  
popular culture there's a  
whole subterranean  
level—a kind of basement

filled with not-so-popular culture. Inside of this obscurantist world, the stuff that's covered in *People* magazine doesn't really exist (except as something to divert your attention while standing on line at the supermarket). It's a place where you can truthfully say that you've never knowingly heard a song sung by Janet Jackson, but you *do* own every extant recording by the Desperate Bicycles (five singles and an LP). It's a swell place. And beneath *it* is yet another, even darker level—sort of a sewer, where what passes for pop culture consists of deeply personal, intensely private expressions of general non-belonging and emotional otherness. And I suppose you could argue that this stuff isn't pop culture at all, but that'd be opening a big can of semantic worms we don't have the space to deal with here, so you'll have to take my word for it. Inside of this contextual cess, the stuff is.

Artistic endeavors in this shadowy plane encompass all the popular media (film, writing, painting...) and the undisputed king of the musical realm is a Texan known simply as Jandek. Believed to be a resident of Houston, Jandek first came to the world's attention in 1978 with an LP called *Ready for the House*. Although it was billed as being by "The Units" (a Texas band that Jandek had reportedly led at an earlier date), the album certainly seems like the work of one man. It is filled with a very different kind of blues—mostly acoustic, almost-whispered, barely structured, quietly scrabbling. Distributed through channels I can't even imagine, *Ready for the House* blew around the country like an old dead leaf painted dark purple.

Eventually the album, with its out-of-synch cover photo showing a sparsely appointed living room, came to the attention of Irwin Chusid, the resident left-field disc-jockey at New Jersey's WFMU. *House's* uniquely distressed signals apparently hit Chusid where he lived. He got in contact with Jandek's label, Corwood, and secured a box of the records. Using them as his megaphone, he began to spread the word amongst potential believers.

One of these copies fell into the hands of Phil Milstein, who reviewed it for *Up* (a now defunct obscurantist music paper) and whose roommate intercepted a phone message from the man himself. Apart from that one close call (and a few written missives, usually penned in a fairly brusque tone), no one has ever heard from Jandek. Because of this lack of hard information, many rumors pertaining to his personal and professional life have been bandied about in polite bohemian drawing rooms. "He's really Tommy Hall from the 13th Floor Elevators." "He's a manic-depressive who does the records as therapy under his doctor's supervision." "The albums were all recorded in one epic burst of activity, and they're being released as he can afford them. When all 19 have come out, that's it." Woof woof blah blah.

Get in touch with his label to try to straighten out all the fol-de-rol and you feel like a sausage hitting a brick wall. There will be no interviews. There will be no photographs. Jandek's records will speak for themselves. And they do.

Thus far, Jandek's LP total is 18. Each of the albums is graced with a lovely, grainy, mysterious photo on the cover and a swell title to match: *Staring at the Cellophane*, *Telegraph Melts*, *Living in a Moon So Blue*. Sometimes a passel of records come out in a year, sometimes there's only one. But there has been at least one every year since 1981 and they all investigate the dark nooks and blind alleys of the human experience. Sometimes with a band (or an overdubbed approximation of one), sometimes in duet with a faceless, wailing woman, sometimes as naked and lonely as a man and a guitar can be, Jandek never fails to touch a nerve that few other artists even acknowledge.

It's a dark night, there's a wet road and you've been in an accident. As you bob on the edge of consciousness, a faint, barely graspable song of longing floats through your head. And it's beautiful. So beautiful and so rich and so deep you can barely fucking stand it. Then it's gone. That's what Jandek's like. I guess it's enough.

—Byron Coley



# Block Party.



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**Van Morrison:** Not quite self-destructive, just obnoxious. The Irish Heartbeat album is a masterpiece and shows how frankly little he gives a damn about popstardom.

**John Cougar Mellencamp:** Had the courage to give up his day job as a popstar to become an artist. Paradox of false arrogance with genuine humility.

**Cheb Khaled:** I agree with Brian.

#### Madonna

**Fela:** Prince, Madonna, Axl, and all of Mötley Crüe are sexual poseurs compared to Fela, the Nigerian king of Afro Beat, jailed dissident and a real-life polygamist, who once told us that having 27 wives inhabited him artistically, because he felt he should be free to share his music with more women. His music is protracted, confident, aural sex. (How the hell did I let these bastards that work for me keep him off our top ten?)

**Jandek:** Got that one in!

**Midnight Oil:** If they were from New Jersey, they'd be bigger than U2.

**Salif Keita:** From Zaire, great musician, uncannily beautiful singer. If you want to know more about him, you should have read FLASH a few months ago. In fact, he's just one of the very many fascinating little-known artists we write about all the time. Have you considered what you're missing by not subscribing? Why not subscribe today!

**Jello Biafra:** Because he fought instead of running away.

**Lon Reed:** After decades of pissing on everything and everyone else, in the last five years, he seems to have decided to piss on himself, too, and he seems comfortable with having done so. I admire that. It's a very sincere form of integrity.

“

People didn't consider that I was actually real, that I could sit and talk and think.

David Cassidy, *The Partridge Family* (May 1965)

”

# MORRISSEY

“I think The Smiths totally spoke for now,” Morrissey proclaimed in the summer of 1988, a year after the band had broken up. “We were definitely the most realistic musical and lyrical voice of the 80s. And that's not just self-bleating.” It's not self-bleating (and if anyone can recognize it, Morrissey can) if the 80s are to be accepted as a time spent adrift, an incubation period for a generation that believes it's owed something, ten years during which there was nothing tangible to fear except sex and anonymity. It's not self-bleating if one understands what it's like to hate mankind, be motivated purely by obsession, consumed by self-pity, paralyzed by love unrequited, happy alone in a room warmed with narcissism. But as a blanket statement, it's laughable.

It is in Morrissey's awkward arrogance that lies The Smiths' ultimate appeal. As a band either worshipped or detested, they achieved their goal, fusing a frail voice with aggressive music, subverting pop convention and erasing the possibility of ambivalence.

Stephen Patrick Morrissey was born in Manchester, England, on 22 May, 1959. His mother was a librarian, he a recluse. He wrote and read and became obsessed with the lives of James Dean and Oscar Wilde. He was fascinated by reports of other lives, at odds with his own. But in music, he found he could be involved—maybe because music can be observed from a distance or bought and claimed as personal property. He saw T. Rex at 13, joined the Mott the Hoople fan club at 14, fancied David Bowie's guises and wrote a book about the New York Dolls. In his late teens, he tried to get published by the *NME*, but was rejected. Finally, he decided if he didn't fit into the existing structure, he'd have to climb over it.

“I always thought being famous was the only thing worth doing in human life,” Morrissey once said. “And anything else was just perfunctory. I always knew something, shall we say, peculiar was going to happen.”

In 1982, when Johnny Marr went to Morrissey's house on an impulse, something peculiar happened. “Since that day,” the guitarist would admit, “my life has totally changed and I know Morrissey's has, too. Right from the beginning we knew it was going to be brilliant.” Both Morrissey, who'd been wallowing in the notion that he was completely misunderstood, and Marr, who'd been messing about with his 60s influences and a drum machine, had found their foil. It would become a classic love affair (although Platonic), transfixed by its own power and depth. It was their hunger for pop success that kept them from the obscurity usually imposed on self-satisfied artistes. The Smiths, on their very first single “*Hand in Glove*” (“Hand in Glove, The sun shines out of our behinds”), combined a blatant testament to their superiority with a spare, rhythmic guitar, coming up with a song almost shocking in its confession but tuneful and catchy.

Morrissey is contradictory. At once self-pitying and egotistic, he became the 80s most unlikely pop star. His inherent arrogance got him up on stage, but only to sing, “If you've got five seconds to spare, I'll tell you the story of my life. Sixteen, clumsy and shy, it's the story of my life. That's the story of my life.” Pathetic and perversely anthemic. So shamelessly vulnerable he invites attack, so sympathetic he commands devotion. Meek but quietly aggressive, Morrissey isn't isolated because of fear—of dismissal or scrutiny—he's self-exiled by disenchantment and apathy. On “Sweet and Tender Hooligan,” he sings, “Tried living in the real world instead of a shell, but was bored before I even began.” He finds himself a great deal more interesting than anything the outside world might hold. “Perhaps I'm unique,” he told an English music paper, “Because people are so dull. I'm not very good at being dull.”

—Christian L. Wright





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Article by Legs McNeil

# SINEAD

**For 21 years, she fought to do it  
her way. But when she won and her dream  
came true, the torment continued.**

**T**he phone would ring.  
"Hello?"  
"You're a slag and a weasel."  
"SINEAD! You sex goddess,  
what's going on?"

"Where's my Elvis lamp?"

I had promised her this great Elvis lamp for her birthday. . . Well, first I promised it as a wedding present, and when I didn't send it, I switched it over to her birthday present. But when she didn't get it on her 23rd birthday last December, she was beginning to doubt the Elvis lamp's existence. It was taking on mythical proportions just like the King himself. But it did exist. It was the tackiest thing imaginable—a great grotesque bust of the King in all his sequined splendor, and right out of the top of his overgrown ducktail spurted a brass rod holding the most tasteful little suburban lamp. The only problem was that it was made out of

Plaster of Paris and weighed a few hundred pounds. And I couldn't find any way to ship it to London.

"I got the lamp. I do! You're going to get it. . . I'm sending it over. . ."

"Yeah sure, you lying slag. Well, you can bring it over when you come to interview me."

"Okay, okay, that's when I'll bring it."

But the thought of lugging Elvis through the airport sent shivers down my spine. Everyone standing around pointing and laughing. I hate to fly as it is, so I didn't need Elvis adding to the drama.

"When are you coming?"

"On Friday. I'll be there on Friday."

But I wasn't there on Friday. And, as I was running out the door to catch my flight Saturday morning, Sinéad caught me.

"Hello?"

"What are you still doing there, Legs?"

"Ah . . . uh . . . ah . . ."

**Photography by Anton Corbijn**

She had on her best nun's voice. A bald little nun, but a nun nonetheless.

"I'm leaving right now, I'm going, I'm outta here. . . ."

"You should have come when you said you were. I thought your plane had gone down in the middle of the Atlantic. . . ."

"Sinead! Come on, don't say that. I got to get on an airplane. . . ."

"You were probably up all night shagging."

"Why do you always expect the worse from me?"

"Because you're a slag and a weasel. . . ."

**I** wasn't the only one to fall in love with her. It seemed like everyone, all 500,000 who bought her debut album, *The Lion and the Cobra* were completely blown away by this mysterious Irish soul with a bald head, combat boots, brilliant piercing eyes and a voice that could trigger the most passionate, anguished emotions—and the most joyous. A voice of pure exploding orgasm that seduced the world and, in doing so, made Sinead O'Connor all things to all people. Since there were no limits or boundaries to the songs she sang—the emotions that haunted her—we jumped right into the ocean of Sinead's endless passion. She became the source. An entity you went to to cop the feeling. Sinead was Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Joan of Arc, St. Bernadette, tortured pal to the Virgin Mary or anyone else we could imagine, because the persona she unleashed was a study in contradiction—the ultimate victim-savior, child-woman, Madonna and whore, rock star and school girl.

The trouble was that Sinead was just a 21-year-old Irish Catholic kid from the suburbs of Dublin, and she was just making it up as she went along. But Sinead did have a bit more experience to draw from. She was born December 8, 1966, to parents whose marriage was rocky at best, but because Ireland doesn't allow for divorce, they struggled to stay together. Sinead responded to her mother's misery by shoplifting and collecting money "for charity."

"I was trying to make my mother happy by getting money for her. Between the ages of 9 and 13 I must have been dragged to police stations about eight or nine times, but I never got charged with anything because I used to put on the waterworks and give them, like, 'Oh, my mother'll kill me'—all that stuff—which I used to believe myself. So I never actually got charged with anything.

"It was over a pair of shoes that finally put me away. I used to steal stupid things like toy makeup sets, just for the sake of doing it. I'd go into a shop and steal a magazine and sweets and things, and then I got into the habit of it. And then, because I was the best at it, I was the one who was sent in to get serious things for other people. Like if my friends wanted to go out with their boyfriends and they wanted a pair of shoes, I was the one who went and got the shoes. Which is how I got caught, stealing a pair of gold shoes for my friend Theona.

"Then I began to steal money off my parents—which everybody did—but they couldn't really handle it."

After bailing her out of Theona's gold shoes fiasco, Sinead's future step-mom sat her down and asked, "How would you like to go to a new school, with lots of new friends?" It wasn't long before Sinead, at 14 found herself in an Irish snakepit of rehabilitation. Its official title was that of a residential center for girls with behavioral problems, but that didn't make it any less of a hell-hole.

"I will never experience such panic and terror and agony over anything like I did at that place. It wasn't a

government-run institution: it was a Catholic one, which is worse, believe me. If you were bad, they sent you upstairs to sleep in the old folks' home. You're in there in the pitch black, you can smell the shit and the puke and everything, and these old women are moaning in their sleep."

The room upstairs was actually a hospice for the dying. That's where they sent bad little 14-year-old girls—to sleep surrounded by all that death. For 18 months, Sinead endured the horror of the "home," but in the process developed an hysterical fear of dying and more fuel for an already fantastic fantasy life.

"I was one of the lucky ones; I was allowed to go outside to school, which the others weren't. I started reading things like *Wuthering Heights* and stuff like that, which I really, really loved. I loved all that really, really romantic stuff, like WB Yeats. I was WB Yeats as far as I was concerned and I was Tess."

**I**t was a teacher at the school for wayward girls who provided Sinead with her first big break by asking the 14-year-old to sing at a wedding. It was there that the teacher's brother, a drummer for the Irish rock group In Tua Nua, heard Sinead and asked her to write some lyrics for some music he had

**"I'm a very impulsive person.  
I just get this feeling in my  
stomach, and I know I've got  
to do it. When I left school it  
was like that: I will be a  
singer, I will succeed,  
because . . . I just knew. . . ."**

written. The result was "Take My Hand," which was recorded by In Tua Nua and soared up the Irish charts.

"That was my first ever experience, and I loved it. It really got me going. Reverb. I discovered reverb, and that was it."

When she was released from the school for wayward girls, Sinead was sent to boarding school in Waterford, 150 miles south of Dublin.

"Everyone from Dublin was considered real strange and especially me, because I had shaved hair and I wore strange clothes. It was a very closed community so it took me literally a year and a half before anyone would speak to me, because they considered me too weird. During that time, I joined a band in Dublin I met during vacation. And I had such good fun that when I went back to school, I really missed being in the band—the only thing I ever felt comfortable doing—where I actually belonged."

She tried to get thrown out of school, and when she couldn't even do that right, Sinead packed up and ran away to Dublin. There she worked as a Kiss-o-gram girl in a French maid's outfit and playing her guitar in pubs at night.

"I'm a very impulsive person. I just get this feeling in my stomach, and I know I've got to do it. I don't think about it, I just do it. I have always been like that,

and when I left school it was like that: I will be a singer, I will succeed, because . . . I just knew. . . ."

"The loudness of my vocals was a complete accident. It started because I used to sing Bob Dylan covers in the pubs, and I used to get really annoyed when people would talk while I was singing, so I just shouted. Then one day, I thought 'This sounds quite good.' But it really frightened people, because I was quite small and had nice long hair. When I came onstage, they thought I'd be really sweet and demure. So it used to frighten them, which I enjoyed."

"But I was more frightened, actually. Still, in my heart I knew it would be alright. It was what I had to do, and that's the way I live my life. Sometimes it works out, and sometimes it doesn't."

In February 1985 it was starting to work out. Ensign Record partners Nigel Grainge and Chris Hill were in Dublin checking out the talent. They thought that Ton Ton Macoute, the band Sinead was fronting, were dreadful. But Grainge was taken with the female singer's voice. Several weeks later, she quit the band and sent Grainge a demo of her own songs. But while Ensign was deciding what to do with Sinead, her mother was killed in an automobile accident.

"I was in a flat in Dublin where I was living. I was there with this boyfriend of mine, and all of sudden we started to talk for no reason about what we would do if our parents died. I got very upset for some reason, like really upset. We just had this discussion, and the next morning I was going to my dad, and I was walking up to the home that Sunday, and I just knew it, and I was destroyed."

"There's no way of saying things like this without it sounding like I'm fucking kooky. But it's true. I just felt like I knew the night before she died that she was going to die. I just knew."

"When she died was when it began to happen. Things really began to happen. Then I just knew that she was around. I could smell her. I knew she was sitting there. I just knew there was something in it and I always felt her telling me almost to do something. I know it sounds mad. . . ."

"Up until that point, it had been a sad relationship. I hadn't seen her very much 'cause I had left and gone away when I was 13. I had always gone back to see her and always felt a great love from the relationship. See, she wasn't a very happy person. She wasn't happy with her life. I always felt some understanding for her. I could never feel hatred or bitterness towards her. I just knew from a small age that she didn't know what she was doing, and she didn't mean it. I always felt a great love and great bond."

"But I think now I can understand her because I am a woman and I am a mother and the frustration that she must have gone through being in Ireland and the age, the generation that she was. There's no divorce, and there's no abortion—no contraception—and now I can look and say, poor woman. What a shitty life she must have had. What a shitty life my father had."

"As a woman—as an Irish woman—I feel that she should have been able to go out with somebody else. She should have been able to remarry. If it was me, I would react in exactly the same way. Just bend the rules."

**W**hen Ensign sent Sinead a plane ticket, she was glad to be getting out of Ireland and making a clean start. But London offered no refuge, living in a cold-water flat in Stoke-Newington, with no friends around to keep her company, waiting for an album to happen. Sinead was desperately lonely. It was through her Aunt that she met an older man and fell in love.

"He was the fulfillment of all my fantasies because



he was black. But he was married. His wife was a homemaker, with kids, and this guy in fact was a minister at this church in London. It lasted about a year and a half. And it was horrible and painful. I was madly in love, basically, and he wasn't. But as time went on, he told me he wasn't leaving his wife or anything, so I finally told him to get lost. And the next day, he came around to my flat with a present. It was a Hoover—a vacuum cleaner—so I thought if this is what it's going to be like, then no way. So I told him to fuck off. I've never figured out why he came with a Hoover.

"He came around the next day to convince me to fuck him again. The fucking bastard had nerve. I don't know why guys always think, 'One last time.' I cried for a while."

After *The Edge*, Sinéad finished putting her band together and headed into the studio to record her first album. But once she was there, producer Mick Glossop had his own ideas about what Sinéad should sound like.

"He was a fucking ol' hippie. He was into 70s music and people like Grace Slick and Joan Baez and he thought I should make a record like that, a kind of Grace Slick sort of album. He had very romanticized ideas of how an Irish woman singer should sound. It was all heavy arrangements and nice little Celtic melodies.

"I didn't want the album to sound the way it sounded, but I didn't say anything for weeks and weeks because I thought, 'Well, if the record company is happy with it, they know more about this

I was glad. I was really glad I was pregnant, but I knew that I'd get a lot of trouble about it. I knew that there'd be trouble."

The record company was not amused and tried to talk her out of having the baby.

"They said they'd invested all this money in me, and that I was being very selfish to want to have a baby. They also told me a lot of shit about how it would die if I went on a plane. I was 20 years of age and I got pregnant by accident. I wasn't looking to get pregnant. I wasn't looking to get married, and I'd only been going out with John for a month. But I was very happy about it even though it wasn't planned."

Ensign scrapped the sessions Sinéad did with Mick Glossop. Six months pregnant, she found herself back in the studio beginning all over again, but this time producing herself.

"Being pregnant made me feel strong, because having a baby is such a big deal—it's like the biggest thing that ever has, or will happen to me. It makes everything else seem trivial. After fighting to keep the baby and going through the pregnancy and labor, I felt like, hell, I can do anything I want. But it was very, very difficult recording while I was pregnant, because I was so moody. I got very exhausted and anemic. The band thought I was being vociferous because I was pregnant, not because I wanted them to do it a certain way. We finished the album, and four weeks later the baby was born."

By the time *The Lion and The Cobra* was finally finished, Ensign Records was suffering cash-flow problems, and Grange sold the label to Chrysalis Records. Though Chrysalis kept Sinéad on, the company didn't have a clue as to what she was all about. They wanted her to "tart" herself up a bit and to act "girly." Sinéad's response was to go to the barber and get her hair cut off.

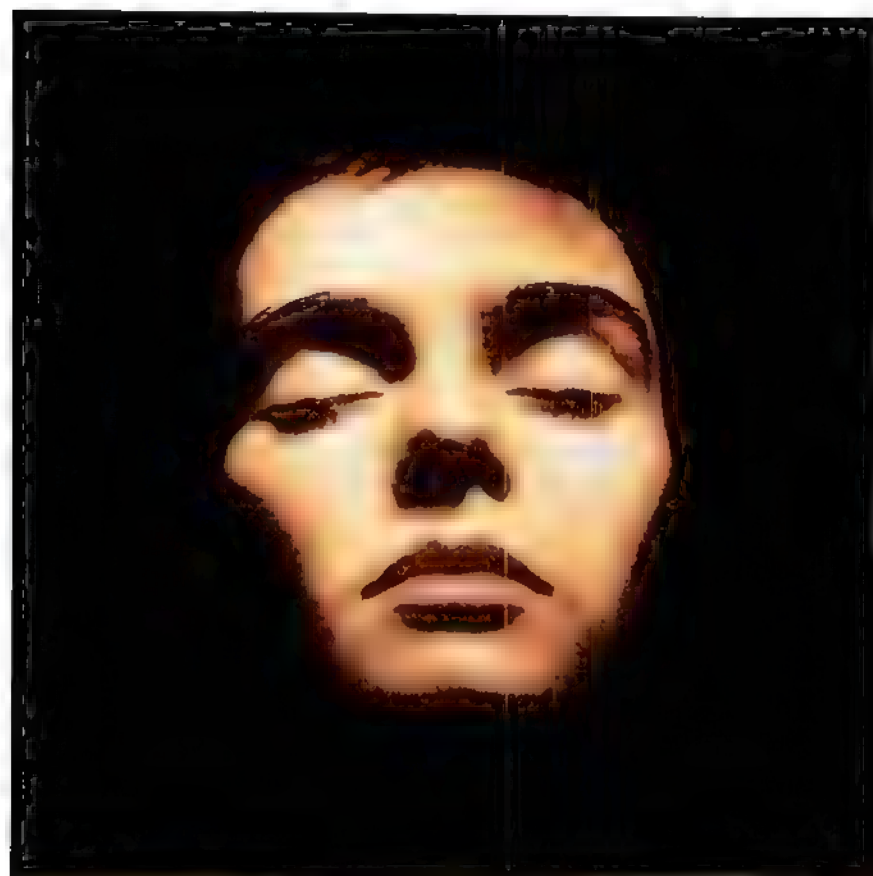
When *The Lion and The Cobra* was released, the record company only expected US sales of 25,000. Instead, the album went gold, Sinéad toured to sold-out venues and became a star at 21.

**L**ike I said, I fell for her too, or rather I fell in love with a great idealized fantasy of her.

We first met in November, 1988, in the London offices of Chrysalis Records. Sinéad sat in the corner of the room looking like some post-modernist, Dickensian street waif in her overcoat and furry Russian cap. She was leaning against the wall reading the trades.

Sinéad was the sexiest woman I'd met in a long while. Probably because with that stubble cut of hers, there was nothing to grab onto. Like a vixen succubus, an ethereal creature who looks as if she could make you feel it all, and just when you did, she'd take to the hills, another notch in her belt. Dazzling and captivating eyes, the most beautiful, fuckable Irish Brogue and skin that looks like it would melt butter. And leaning up against the wall reading magazines in her just-released-from-the-concentration-camp look, she blew everyone else away. I wanted to stare at her, but I was trying to be cool, you know, just catching glimpses of her when she wasn't looking my way. The other women, though supportive and friendly, were a bit tense in Sinéad's presence. Because Sinéad's presence doesn't lend itself to making one feel particularly comfortable. At a time when everyone is trying to conform for fear of rejection, Sinéad has wiped away all the normal reference points from her body.

I was amazed she was such a tiny thing. She came up to about my armpits. And I kept thinking, geez, how does such a little thing take up so much space? There wasn't an inch of the room she didn't control.



**A**s the affair was going from bad to worse, her professional life began to pick up. Sinéad met Fachtina O'Kelly—fellow Irish malcontent and ex-Boomtown Rats and Bananarama manager—and signed him as her manager. With Fachtina, it didn't take long before she was recording the song "Heroin," with U2's guitarist The Edge for the soundtrack to the film *Captive*.

"I met Bono about six months after I moved to London. He heard some tapes I did with In Tua Nua years and years ago, and we just became friendly, and then he rang up and said The Edge was doing this thing, and would I like to do it? So I did it."

than I do, so I shouldn't say anything.' Then they said they didn't like it. It was just shit, it was all fucking Irish, ethereal and mystical. It never occurred to me that I actually had the right to question. I deferred to him because I was stupid. I was ignorant, and they played on my ignorance."

And there was another problem. Sinéad was pregnant by drummer John Reynolds.

"It's a worrying thing for a man to have some girl come up and say, 'I'm having your baby,' but I remember taking him to this dingy, depressing café where we drank some horrible greasy tea and I was crying and said, 'I'm pregnant.' I was terrified. I mean,

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And I kept thinking, how does such a huge voice come out of such a little person? I couldn't figure how the voice managed to fit inside her. Then her manager led us into a humongous board of directors' office with lush wood panelling, mile-high ceilings and the longest table in Christendom. Sinead sat down across from me and finally removed her hat. God is she gorgeous. I wanted to pick her up and throw her across the table and...

"Aren't you going to press the record button?"

**A** couple of months later, after I got back from El Salvador, the phone rang.

"I'm coming to New York."

"Great, great."

But it wasn't great. I'd forgotten that I was having a reading—some friends over to read aloud what they'd been writing—the same night we agreed to get together.

"I'm sorry, I forgot that I had it planned..." I told her when she called from her hotel.

"Well, aren't you going to invite me?"

"Geez, Sinead, you're a real pal."

She liked ripping into me. No, she loved it. By keeping the focus on me, we didn't have to concentrate on what was going on with her. The fact was that after all the success and acclaim Sinead was experiencing, she was still a desperately unhappy little girl.

**T**he next afternoon she was sitting on the brown couch listening to Wee Wee Papa Girls on the boom box and looking like a waif who'd just come in off the street to get out of the cold. To pass some time and then move on.

"Do you want to read the intro?" I asked, junking any sort of professional ethics in favor of getting a reaction. She was still working on the LP, so the story I had interviewed her for in London got pushed back. But I had finished the introduction and was curious to see if she'd like it.

I immediately regretted the decision and hid in the kitchen making a pot of tea, but then finally got the nerve to peek in. The smile was now stuck in a laugh, and her cheeks were blushing the color of tomatoes as she read. *"Sinead O'Connor is a beautiful 22-year-old woman from Dublin, Ireland, and the most original singer to appear in a long while. No one really knows just what the hell the lyrics or intentions of her songs are, but the emotional reality is immediate. The songs evoke powerful feelings of lost lovers' dances of confusion; all the pain and murky hurt, all the screaming terror and all the bullshit. And then once in a while, a glimpse of the beauty..."*

"Fair enough," she said when she was done. It was a phrase she used constantly. It was what she said instead of arguing. But whenever she said it, the entire room got real cold and you suddenly found yourself alone, drifting on an iceberg, 3,000 miles from nowhere. Only this time, she said it with a smile, still blushing. With Sinead, it's the smile that makes all the difference.

The introduction claimed that she was the most intimidating person I'd met in a long time. Sinead didn't agree.

"I don't think I threaten anyone."

"Sinead, you threaten everyone."

"Oh, and what makes you such an authority on Sinead O'Connor?"

"I'm not. It's just interesting watching you."

"And why is that?"

"Cause you hardly ever blink."

"I don't blink... That's the stunning revelation you've come up with?"

"Well, your eyes are so big and beautiful, and when you never blink and you're looking at someone, it's intimidating as hell."

"So I should blink more?"

"Fuck it. It never pays to argue with a Vulcan."

The Wee Wee Papa Girls tape ended, and now that it was my turn to put something on, and she hated the Monkees, she made an excuse for us to leave. She'd do anything rather than listen to the Monkees.

"Do you think there's a place around I can get tram lines for my head?"

"What?"

"Tram lines."

"You mean like railroad tracks? For your head?"

She explained that what she wanted were racing stripes cut into the hair on the side of her head. "Tram lines" is what she called them. It was a year before every homeboy in America had a design cut into the back of his head, and the concept was still new.

"You know, the lines a lot of black people wear to show a part. I think they look brilliant."

"Well, I guess you could go up to Harlem and get them. I'll take you if you want."

"Yes, thank you."

"Now?"

"Yes, please."

We got a cab and rode up to 125th Street and Lenox.

"Excuse me, you know where there's a barber shop?"

A passerby pointed to around the corner, ignoring me, but watching Sinead all the way down the street. She was dressed in a denim jacket, T-shirt, jeans and Doc Martens, and had her 18-month-old son Jake's pink pajamas hanging off the back of her jeans the way some people tie a sweater around their waist. She looked different, but cute as hell. And oblivious to the stares her appearance invited.

"What's that?"

"A Botanica, one of those shops that sell religious stuff—potions and candles. Voodoo and Santeria stuff."

"Brilliant! I'd love to go in, can we?"

"Sure."

We stood staring at the grotesque, ornate statues of Christ and the Virgin Mary.

"I should get Jake something for his room, but I'm afraid if I got him one of these, he'd grow up with

**Chrysalis wanted her to "tart" herself up a bit and to act "girlie." Sinead's response was to go to the barber and get her hair cut off.**

some horrible complex."

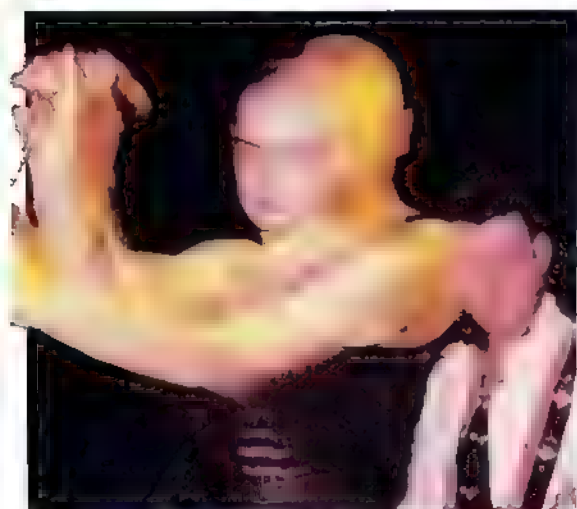
"Aw, the guilt would do him good."

"It never does anybody any good. The very tiny bit of religion which I experienced has induced in me this huge guilt complex—so imagine what it does to somebody who's had a lot? The first man I ever took my clothes off in front of was John Reynolds, Jake's father, and that was only two and a half years ago. Because I felt it was dirty and shameful and everything. I believed it a lot—that you're going to be punished and that you're going to go to hell. So it's very dangerous."

"But, come on, didn't you get into it? Didn't you ever want to be a nun and suffer?"

"I did, yes." The embarrassed smile was back. "In school we had to do this project on St. Bernadette, and I became completely obsessed with her. I made my mother take myself and my little brother to Lourdes for our confirmation. I wanted to see St. Bernadette's body. I was so moved. The whole atmosphere of Lourdes really moved me, and I thought, 'I'm going to be a nun.' Up until very recently, I used to... You know, when you're a child and you lie in bed and you start thinking about dying and things, and getting afraid... Well, I used to be afraid that one day I'd wake up and decide I wanted to be a

*Continued on page 142*



"Oh yeah, sure, but, but..."

"I'll see you then."

The problem was women. I'd been in a magnanimous mood when I'd invited friends over, and I'd forgotten that some of the women didn't know about the others, or pretended like they didn't know about the others. But now they were arriving at my door for the most uncomfortable evening of my life. Lots of ex-girlfriends in the same room at the same time. Yeah, a real brilliant idea. And just to add to the drama, in came the Bald Headed Wonder to enjoy every minute of watching me squirm.

"It serves you right for being such a slag and a weasel, lying to all those nice girls so you can get in there knickers, womanizing scum, you're going to burn in hell."

"It's not like that... I... uh... ummmm... Well, you know, Sinead, I am single. I'd been with someone seven years and..."

"And broke the poor girl's heart with your filthy, dirty ways. It's no wonder she left you for someone else."





ESPIRIT





# Darwin

Fiction by William Gibson

Santa Ana winds suck at the Soviet UV film Kelsey's mother tapes over the windows of their hotel room. The wind finds other ways to enter the building; it hums in the dry shafts and corridors, sifting falls of pale dust from the ceiling tiles. Through the trembling membrane of Russian plastic, Kelsey sees the city burning gold in brown air, the tall frayed stumps of dead palms receding along the avenue.

Behind her, on the floor, Trev does television, grunting softly as the dull black vest strapped across his chest thumps him in a fight scene. He does television all day, hogs the vest, the gloves, the black glasses, looping the same show over and over, "Gladiator Skull." Kelsey hates "Gladiator Skull," hates the way the vibrotactile vest punches you in the ribs if you let them get you. They always do.

She has a show called "Natureland" she loops sometimes; you ride a horse along a beach. "Natureland" doesn't punch you in the ribs. The sun can't even hurt you, in "Natureland."

In the park at the end of the avenue she can see prone figures wrapped in silvery reflective plastic, people with nowhere else to go.

Trev grunts again; his lips move. He talks to himself when he does television, but she doesn't try to make out what he says. He probably doesn't know she can hear him. He's probably forgotten they're

moving to the Darwin Free Trade Zone in three days—the DFT, her mother called it, looping a travel show; Kelsey put on the black glasses and walked the length of the mall like any other mall, intercut with exterior shots of orange cargo helicopters lowering white housing modules to a plain of raw earth. The young Chinese announcer had a broad Australian accent.

She runs her fingernail down the UV film, leaving the lightest possible scratch.

She liked it better when they lived in Moscow,

**Eyes still closed, screwed up  
tight, she wills her mother's  
return from the mirrored  
towers, from the blank walls at  
street-level, the guards, the  
patient chopping of the eyeless  
gunships—from the city of  
burning gold.**

warm soup-smells and subways like old palaces.

They lived where the company wants her mother. Her mother has a job, but Kelsey doesn't know what it is. Something like doing television with numbers. When her mother talks about the company, Kelsey imagines a big animal. Her mother laughs, says that's right. Says the company has offices in all the big cities, but it doesn't live anywhere, not in LA or Moscow or Singapore; says that cities and companies matter now, not countries.

Kelsey isn't sure what countries are. Lines on a map. Colors. A concept dim as aristocracy. Kelsey

has two passports, one issued by the United States of America, the other by her mother's company. The men in the airports who look at passports only care about which company. Her mother's other passport is from a country called Quebec. She keeps it in her suitcase.

She looks out at the dead palms. Something spread up the coast from Mexico and killed them all. She's seen live ones in "Natureland."

The windowless black bulk of a police helicopter lumbers past in the gold-brown distance, level with Kelsey's eyes, its belly studded with sensors and weapons. At night she can hear sheeling to the east. Flashes in the sky. The sound of helicopters. The hotel flatscreen tells her police are fighting the gangs. It's about drugs. "These are drugs," the flatscreen says, showing her milky pale beads, bright green powder, something blood-brown and lumpy in a little plastic tube. "Don't do drugs," the flatscreen says. Trev knows the names; ice, dancer, brown.

The flatscreen flicks to the weather, to seroanalysis averages for California-Oregon, a factoid on EBV mutation rates, specific translocations at the breakpoint near the c-myc oncogene.

She tunes out. She hangs on the sound of the wind blowing east from the desert.

Closing her eyes, she sees Shibuya at night, the crowds under the lights, her father there, her biological father, the faces she knows from pictures, reaching down to take her hand, explaining that her mother is her genetic mother, not biological, that Trev's biological was someone else, another surrogate; that he and her mother are separated now but the contracts remain in effect.

Eyes still closed, screwed up tight, she wills her mother's return from the mirrored towers, from the blank walls at street-level, the guards, the patient chopping of the eyeless gunships—from the city of burning gold.

Her brother curses softly, mechanically, losing his game, and she wishes she were already in Darwin, walking new miles of mall like every mall anywhere, like doing television.

It's almost Kelsey's birthday.  
In Darwin she'll be nine.



Illustration by Karl Denham

# SAHARA CLUB

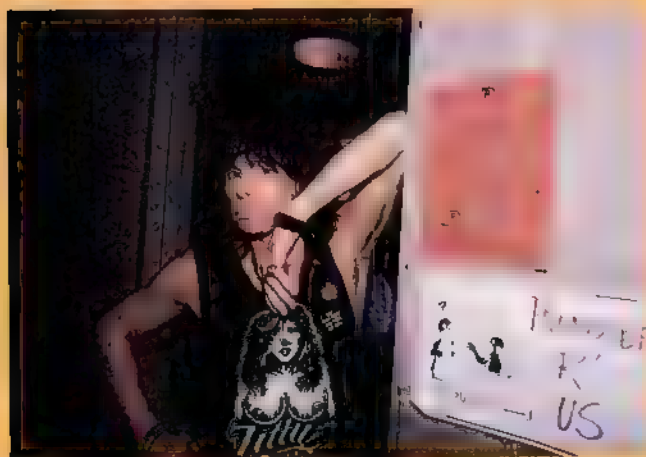


A  
Contemporary  
Sportswear  
Collection  
Available at  
Department and  
Specialty Stores  
Nationwide



# ROCK around THE CLOCK

## A Day in the Life of Rock'n'Roll



Woke up, fell out of bed, dragged a comb across our heads (gee, this sounds familiar). Found our way downstairs and drank a cup, and looking up, we noticed it was December 15, 1989. What was Paul McCartney doing today? And what were Prince, Dogzilla, New Kids on the Block, Little Anthony, Mötley Crüe, Duran Duran, Sonic Youth and James Brown doing? In fact, what was rock'n'roll doing?

## Friday, December 15th, 1989

**6:30 AM EST—South Carolina State Park Correction Center—Richland County, South Carolina**

James Brown walks out of his cell to a breakfast of chilled grapefruit, eggs, cereal, biscuits and coffee.

**8:03 AM—The Kalamazoo Gazette Newsroom—Kalamazoo, Michigan**

Called Rogers and Cowan, the publicity firm in New York City that handles Prince, among others, to get some info on a piece I'm writing. The humiliating thing about being in Kalamazoo is getting blown off by big city publicists in New York and LA. So when the Rogers and Cowan secretary took my message, I politely asked, "Would you like me to spell 'Kalamazoo?'"

"I'm college educated," she snapped.

"I know you are but what am I?" I shot back. But she didn't get it.

**9:07 AM—Tom Griswold's car—Indianapolis, Indiana**

Bob & Tom's morning radio show on WFBQ has a tough time getting started. Tom is snowed in at his driveway, so he decides to call in from his car phone.

"This would make great ski conditions," Griswold deadpans, "If only we had some hills around here."

**9:12 AM—Paul's Roadside Attraction—Portland, Maine**

No visible signs that Mötley Crüe and Warrant were here last night; no arrests reported for drunk and disorderly conduct.

**9:34 AM—(8:34 AM CENTRAL STANDARD TIME)—Lied Performing Arts Center—Lincoln, Nebraska**

The director of the University of Nebraska's new 2,300 seat performing arts center walks into the news conference and announces he'd be willing to consider booking rock acts into the hall. What an asshole—somebody finally told him he could make more money putting on shows other than Doc Severinson and Marie Osmond.

Meanwhile, down in the mall, Lincoln's rock'n'roll genius, Charlie Burton, author of the classics "Rock'n'Roll Behavior" and "Breathe For Me, Presley," is spending his time selling an oboe to one of Lincoln's pawn shops.

**10:00 AM—(9:00 AM CST)—Chanhassen, Minnesota**

Prince has already left the building when Paisley Park staffers begin to arrive at the production complex. But the smell of incense—burned during yesterday and last night's typical 16-hours—still hangs in the air in Studio A.

"A" is the largest of Paisley's three commercial studios, but these days it's reserved for Prince exclusively, as the decorating touches in the control room attest. Funky, colorful scarves fill the room: every inch of bare wall space billows with them. By the couch are a stack of CDs that Prince listens to during his infrequent breaks: Tone Loc, Soul II Soul, INXS, De La Soul, Sly's Stand and Miles' Columbia Years.

A careful of finished tracks by Prince and the other artists he's producing sits upstairs in his business office. Once catalogued, the tapes will

**8:05 PM—Aerosmith (singer Steve Tyler shows) launches a national tour to great fanfare in Charleston, West Virginia**



Gene Kirkland



Chris Hartlage

be moved to the underground vault, which one staffer estimates to contain "at least 500 finished or near-finished Prince tracks."

**10:06 AM—Publishing Company—New York City**

I was singing "Middle Age Crazy" and dialing North Carolina when the buyer picked up. I stopped right at the part that goes, "... his big 98 Oldsmobile, gotta a heck of a deal ..."

Halfway down the list I saw that she hadn't ordered any rock'n'roll books lately.

"So far no rock titles."

"What?"

"Rock books, books on rock'n'roll music. Don't you carry them?"

"We do, but they don't sell well here," she said. "Maybe they do better at the malls, or maybe people who read rock'n'roll books don't go into book stores, maybe they go to record stores."





*8:15 PM—Little Anthony, backstage after his show at DC's Anton's 1201 Club, reflects on all the audiences he remembers, but who don't remember him.*

It was like that all morning.

"Yo, Flip, how are the rock'n'roll books moving?"

"They don't," he laughed. "Rock bands have a short life span. But out at the malls they go like crazy, that's where all the traffic is. But basically the rock section is a graveyard."

He's right: by the time I finish the morning's order, I have 47 titles, not one of them rock'n'roll.

**10:09 AM—(9:09 AM CST)—Home—Dallas, Texas.**

Cranked up the heat. Made coffee as the radio station KERA said 35-degrees and falling. Too cold for Texas.

On the drive into work, I punch buttons, playing my usual game of "What's Up Doc?" with the radio. Dallas has a wide spectrum of formats; at least one of just about anything you

can imagine—from an AM that programs Bobby Blue Band in the normal course of things to the All-Layla format.

In the last six weeks, I've seen the Stones twice, the B-52's, a massive local rock showcase called Dimensions of Dallas last weekend, with Tammy Wynette sandwiched in, New Age—some good, some bad—Tony Bennett, the Moscow Circus.

I was fact-checking the footnotes for a huge piece regurgitating 80s pop culture. By the time I ran down the name of the guy who dubbed my generation the "baby boom," I wanted to see it in his epitaph.

**10:16 AM—Xpertz Promotions—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.**

"First you go in with the soft sell," Tony Shelton, the 6'8" 330-pound owner of Xpertz Promotions says with an all-too-friendly grin.

"Then if you don't get anywhere, you do a little wheeling and dealing. Then you get into pounding on the desk and shit like that. I've actually had to pick people up a few times."

"Do you promote records? Or do you beat people up?" I ask.

"Sometimes both."

**10:45 AM—South Carolina State Park Convention Center—Richland County, South Carolina.**

James Brown enters the prison kitchen where he works as a cook and stares at the trays of sliced meat for lunch. Today they were making potato soup, crackers, brownies, a cold plate of salami, turkey, cheese and salad, ice tea and punch. He tastes one of the brownies, it's not so bad.

**10:49 AM—(9:49 CST)—Wavelength Office—New Orleans, Louisiana.**

The morning mail brought one hand-sewn cloth

napkin from a jazz fan in Poland, a letter from Shirl and Dick recounting the Melbourne, Australia cajun scene and a note from a BBC DJ looking for help booking Chubby Carrier and the Zydeco Cha-Cha's.

"Hey Clarence," Connie Atkinson, the silk-stocked editrix of the legendary decade-old fanzine, *Wavelength*, asks over the phone to

New Orleans.

Called Wolf Trap in Vienna, Virginia, regarding the Bowzer (Sha-Na-Na) rock'n'roll show. Called London and tried to arrange a tour for Johnny Johnson (Chuck Berry's piano player) after he finishes his three dates with Eric Clapton, Robert Cray and Buddy Guy. Talked to Leon Russell's agent about seeing if he could help me with some dates for the Persuasions. Talked to the Searchers' manager in London about bringing them over here in mid-July-August.

**11:01 AM—Erwin Music Store—Charleston, South Carolina.**

Hustled downtown to open my record store to get the new releases by Kate Bush, Dylan and David Byrne. Top sellers at the moment continue to be the B-52's, R.E.M. and Drivin' and Cryin'.

Kaoma's "Lambada," just released in the USA, is moving steadily, probably because we play it all the time in the store, and a new compilation of dance music from Cameroon, "The American Typic Collection," is constantly going in and out of stock. Blueswise, Bobby Radcliffe's very hot. "Dresses Too Short" is our choice for the week.

**11:14 AM—Robert Christgau's home—New York City.**

Spent an hour talking book with my Pantheon editor (what does CMA stand for? What's a mbira?), then stuck on Die Warzau's "Disco Rigidio" for the ride home. Funkier than ZE. I cracked a King Oliver CD to educate my five-hour-a-week assistant, ending up (it beats writing) comparing the vinyl—mellow, less vivid, more and less "natural." Listened to Craig G., second side of the ZE, "Murmur" while taping it for someone at Pantheon, half the Captain Swing CD, the Pet Shop Boys for the big essay. Squeezed Death of Samantha and Eat onto a C-90 for future reference. The essay is going nowhere. Coffee is useless.

**11:33 AM—Handsome Dick Manitoba's bedroom on the Lower East Side—New York City.**

I would've liked to have slept for another hour cause I usually don't get to sleep 'til 5:00 or 6:00 in the morning. But I couldn't fall back asleep. Every morning at 11:00 or 11:30 the owner of

my building puts the dogs in the back yard. "Wolfe," the newest addition, loves to bark for 2 minutes straight every 10 minutes 'til I wake up. When I complain to my landlord about the barking dog, he says, "The dogs bark at 11:30 in the morning. That's late enough for you to sleep."

**11:40 AM—(10:40 CST)—Kansas City, Missouri.**

Big Dude's Music City is quiet for a Friday: one bearded guy buying guitar strings, one stringy kid checking out cymbals. The radio is playing Cheech and Chong's Christmas routine. Musician's referrals confetti a bulletin board at the back.

"Funk/Power-rock psychedelic straight from hell band seeks lead guitarist."

"Thrash/Christian metal band auditioning vocalists."

**12:00 PM—(9:00 AM PACIFIC STANDARD TIME)—Hollywood, California.**

On the tenth floor of the Capitol Tower in Hollywood, A&R man Tim Devine is taking a meeting with an unsigned band.

The band members are attentive but solemn as they sit through Devine's critique, and then his suggestions about attorneys, managers, further demos and showcases.

But it's clear that the band is getting no formal label interest.

Afterward, Devine admits he doesn't know whether Wild Horses will "make it," and he's not sure whether he would've met with them had he not known a friend of theirs.

"There's a danger in an A&R person bestowing too much feedback, pro or con, on a baby band, because the band seizes on that attention and becomes demanding of the A&R person's time. That frequently results in daily calls, which are fielded by a secretary."

**12:16 PM—(10:16 AM MST)—Montana Avenue—Bozeman, Montana.**

"He lives on Montana Avenue, but it would be easier for me to take you there than to tell you how to get to it," answers Shaun, a record store clerk, when I ask him how to get to Marc's house.

Marc just moved to Bozeman after living in Paris, London and New York City. He's starting an avant-garde band, the Analogs, and wants me to hear a cassette recording the group made in his living room. Shaun and I trudge off in a north-easterly direction looking for Montana Avenue and the 90-minute cassette. The one that's supposed to be Marc's house is a small clapboard dwelling compressed by the blanket of snow that fell the previous night.

Knock, knock. But there's no sign of Marc or the tape.

**12:24 PM—South Carolina State Park Correction Center—Richland County, South Carolina.**

James Brown finishes cooking lunch, grabs a sandwich and goes to watch TV.

**1:00 PM—(12:00 PM CST)—Samurai Saki House—Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.**

Flamin' Lips bassist Mike Ivins is having a liquid lunch—a cold beer—and taking the chill of icy winds buffeting the restaurant. "Rock'n'roll is more than just music or how you play," he says.



**12:00 AM—Old Jack Guthrie** is used to rock'n'rollers in *Dad's* all-night cafe in Dallas. *Three on a Hill* aren't gigging tonight, but midnight lunch is their regular schedule.

"Frogman" Henry. "You want me to list your home phone number for anyone who wants to get a hold of you?"

"Yup," replies Frogman, the toad-throated auteur of that oldies radio staple, "Ain't Got A Home."

Connie punches up the phone numbers of one killer musician after another, trying to tie up the loose ends on *Wavelength's* compilation of booking information for New Orleans' notoriously laid-back area performers.

"Record companies call us up wanting to record a hot New Orleans band," Connie cracks. "We tell 'em, give us a half-hour and we'll get one together."

She's kidding.

"See, we don't have bands in New Orleans: we have musicians. This city just doesn't fit into the multi-national corporate framework of pop music."

**10:50 AM—(8:50 AM MOUNTAIN STANDARD TIME)—Downtown—Cheyenne, Wyoming.**

"What are you guys doing?" Tony Dee of KFBQ radio in Cheyenne asks when the cops arrived. Snarled traffic has local police more than a little upset as Cheyenne's hottest rock'n'roll station gives away free gas near downtown Cheyenne. The cops just look at Tony, then quickly disperse the grumbling crowd.

"Hey, if we want to give away free gas, what the hell?" Tony cries out as everyone drives away.

**11:00 AM—Banner Talent Agency—New York City.**

Finished writing a proposal for Martha and the Vandellas to appear, along with Chubby Checker and the Buckingham's, at a private party for a big convention of national television program executives at Tribune Broadcasting, in







# 3RD BASS

**THE CACTUS STANDS FIRM**

**3RD BASS**

**"THE CACTUS ALBUM"**

The strength of the message, and the power of the beat are products of the environment. Their debut, "The Cactus Album," features the hit Steppin' To The A.M. plus The Gas Face and Product Of The Environment.

**3RD BASS. On DefJam/Columbia.**

Steppin' To The A.M. produced by Hank Shocklee, Keith Shocklee and Eric "Vietnam" Sadler.

The Gas Face produced by Prince Paul.

Product Of The Environment produced by Sam Sayer for Sam I Am Productions Inc. & 3rd Bass, M.C. Serch & Pete Nice for R.I.F. Productions.



## PUBLIC ENEMY FEAR OF A BLACK PLANET



"It's the way you dress or how you get up in the afternoon."

The power crowd lunchers turn up their noses as soon as they catch sight of Mike in his dreadlocks and dark shades, looking like a pale member of the Jamaican Mafia.

**2:20 PM—Capitol Records—New York City.**

John and Simon of Duran Duran are seated next to each other with the camera close to Simon's ear. The room is hot, and it looks like the film reporter was fighting off a bitchy mood, looking like she's trying to keep cool while the camera man figures something out.

"We need a hand-and-head shot, Simon," the cameraman says.

"Oh, like a semi-interested half hand wave?" Simon asks, a perfectly blank smile plastered on his face. John tries not to laugh.

**2:30 PM—(9:30 AM ALASKA/HAWAII STANDARD TIME)—Ken Rosene's office—Honolulu, Hawaii.**

It's cold in Honolulu, the mid-50's. Maybe that was paradise for a Minnesotan, but here it feels like 50-below. So it's easy to tell the locals from the tourists. We are wearing sweaters and boots, the tourists shorts.

Local promoter Ken Rosene is talking to Bobby Brown's manager in L.A. Rosene is bringing Brown to Honolulu for a New Year's Eve show at the Neil Blaisdell Arena, a midtown civic auditorium which seats 8,000 people.

"We figure about 90 percent of the major bands we get here are also playing Japan or Australia," he says.

The song on the cassette is "Bongo Madness," a goofy sample of the word "bongo" recited over a musical bed reminiscent of the "Gimme Shelter" intro, which had just been submitted to the Library of Congress for copyright approval, but the Library of Congress has already rejected it twice.

"Since they get a free stopover anyway, they'll stop here to cut down their expenses."

Because Hawaii is separated from the Mainland US by 2,300 miles of open sea, the main expense for a band playing Hawaii is equipment freight.

"But there are bands that love playing here so much that they just work around that, like Bon Jovi. Journey even shipped their own stage and lights here by boat."

But playing Hawaii is never a gold mine.

"Van Halen sold out two shows here this year, and I don't think they walked away with a profit."

**2:35 PM—Glenn's apartment—New York City.**

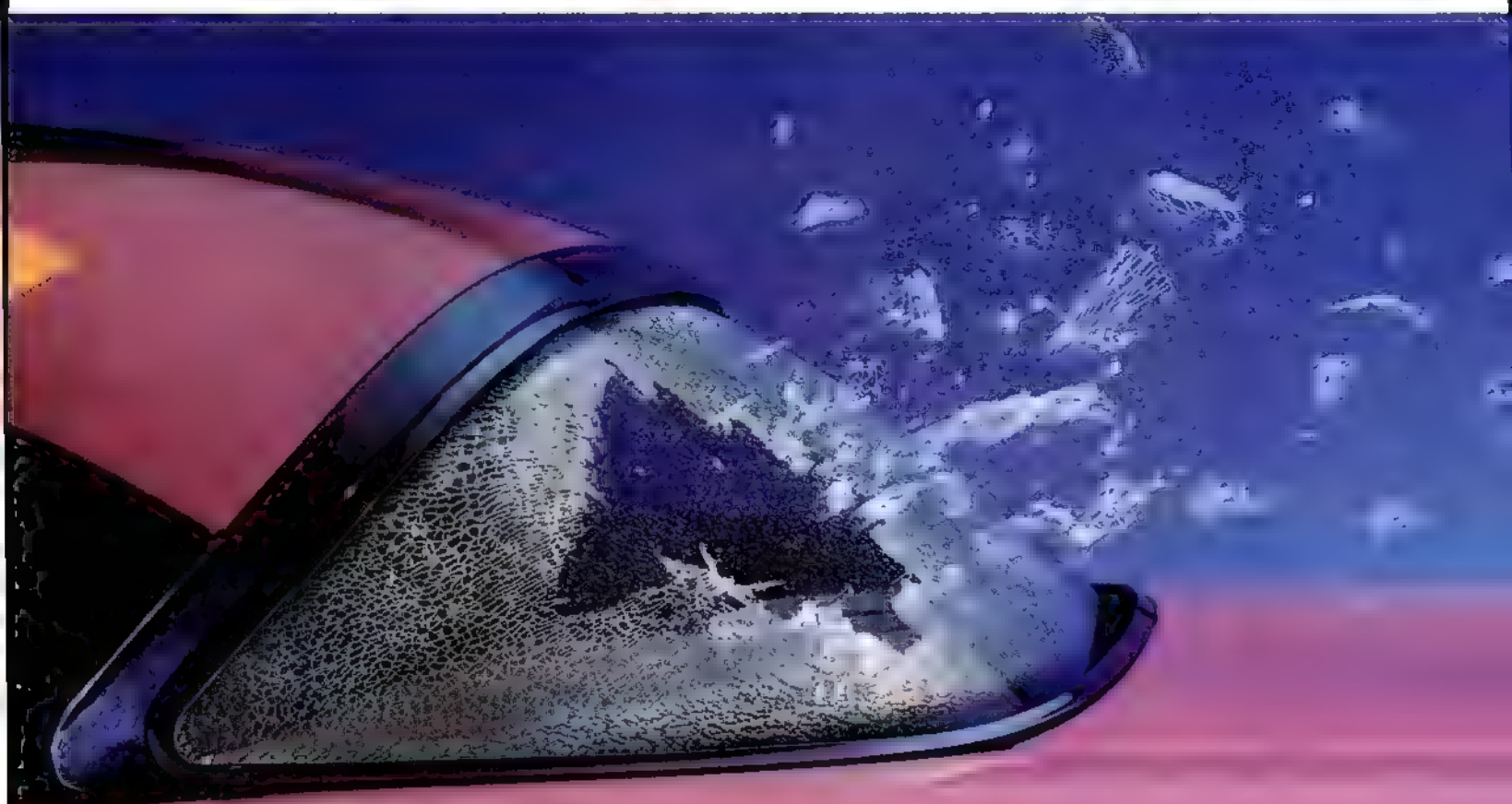
Glenn Stranpka of Raging Slab went to Luigi's for a slice of pizza and then to the lumber store to buy a 5' 1 1/2" dowel rod that he was going to use to make a table with. But the phone keeps ringing. Ronnie Wood is opening a club in New York and wants Slab to play there. Then the insurance adjuster calls, because Glenn wrecked a rent-a-car in LA, and he wants to tape Glenn's account of the accident. The car had an air bag that was dysfunctional: as he was pulling out of a parking space in Hollywood it popped in his face and Glenn ran right into a Jeep Cherokee.

But what he's supposed to be doing is a cover of the Lee Michaels song, "Do You Know What I Mean," only the 45 rpm on his record player doesn't work. He has some chopped liver while he thinks about it, and then spins the record by hand.

**2:47 PM—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.**

Walking through Tower Records' front door, customers are greeted by a 20-foot Christmas tree. A dozen or so TV sets hang from the ceiling with care, playing the same music video. The music on the sound system is John Lee Hooker's new album, *The Healer*, and the aging bluesman's seasoned, leathery voice lends a pleasant contrast to the store's ultra-modern motif.

"The rap and a lot of the R&B product is bought almost equally by whites and blacks. Maybe if you were to go outside the city you might see a difference," Tower music buyer Jay Simon explains to a friend. "But in the city here there's not much of a gap. In some of the more





rock-oriented fields, there are bigger gaps, but on the whole the gaps are being cut down drastically."

**3:15 PM—Harvard University—Boston, Massachusetts.**

A student in any course on a Friday afternoon is scarce, but Tim Ryback had found enough of them to hold a discussion on his new book *Rock Around the Bloc*. The book is an in-depth history of rock music in Communist Europe since the 1950s, and with it, Ryback hopes to "dispel the Western impression that rock music is new to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union."

It's an interesting theory: since rock music is the single most pervasive form of mass culture in the Eastern bloc, Ryback argues that East Berlin's Ministry of Culture did not take mass culture for granted.

One high Soviet official even called rock'n'roll ideological AIDS!

**3:17 PM—(2:17 PM CST)—Graceland—Memphis, Tennessee.**

As I approached the Elvis Presley Shopping Plaza to purchase my tickets for the Graceland tour, the King was crooning "Santa bring my baby back to me." The plaza resembled a K-Mart at holiday season; the plastic ornamentation leaping out, silently caroling Buy! Buy! Buy!

My tour group consists of people from Australia, France and Ethiopia, though the most difficult accent to understand is that of the people from Shelbyville, which I gather is not far from Memphis. They're the only ones taking more pictures than me.



Trailing the group, I watch the couple from Shelbyville photographing Elvis' Jungle Room.

"I'll do it in sections," the husband says to his wife, and then maps out each shot. He could've covered the space in three shots, but he shoots four to be certain.

Lisa Marie's picture is hanging in the dining room.

"She's 21 now and upon reaching the age of 25, she will inherit the entire Presley Estate," the guide tells us. She points out that the Christmas tree in the dining room is exactly where it used to stand when Elvis stood—behind the dining room table and not obstructing the view of any of the 14 RCA TV sets.

"Is that a real tree or a fake tree?" I ask.

"Uhhhhh, it's a, uh, real tree, as far as I know."

As I move across the entry hall to the living/music room, another guide taps me on the shoulder.

"It's a fake tree," she says.

"Fake tree?"

"Fake."

**3:30 PM—National Artist Convention—Greenbelt, Maryland.**

The video machine sucks another tape into its maw, and the image of Vince Vance and the Valiants jerks onto the monitor. There are plenty of other videos from which to choose—in fact, an entire supply closet full of audition tapes from Top 40 bands looking for steady work. But Vince Vance's tape was next in line.

"This guy's popular for convention crowds," Tom Hall of National Artist Corporation explains. "The convention guys like the glitzy stuff."

Vince Vance is nothing if not glitzy, a plume of blonde hair thrusting straight up from the hairline like a wave breaking on his forehead. Vance happens to be the leader of "America's premier nostalgia revue," at least according to the narrator of his audition tape. And he's available just for you.

"Basically, there's a few factors people look at when they're hiring a band for a hotel lounge or a wedding," says Carlos Larraz, co-owner of National Artists. "One is price, of course. Then there's repertoire—how versatile the band is, how many different age groups they can appeal to. And then there's volume. Some hotels and weddings don't like it when the band plays real loud."

**3:40 PM—(1:40 PM MST)—Scott's house—Bazeman, Montana.**

"We'll have to work up 'Dancing Barefoot' some way so we can play it at Willie's," suggests Scott,

*10:00 PM—Prior to their vegetarian closing party at Sardi's (11:30 PM), Paul McCartney closed his North American tour at Madison Square Garden, in the heart of the far district. Linda's Meat-Is-Murder message now goes home, to the other side of the Atlantic.*



the rail-thin lead guitarist of the Up Stream Boys and Bob. He laughs at the obvious contradiction of playing a Patti Smith song in a country and western bar. Country is still king in the Big Sky state, but it pays the bills when nothing else will.

**4:00 PM—Onstage—Newport, Virginia.**

"Attitude check," calls the bouncer at Onstage. "Fuck you!" choruses the late-afternoon crowd.

**4:11 PM—Graceland—Memphis, Tennessee.**

As the tour ends, the guide finally tells us that Elvis died of "cardiac arrhythmia, also known as a heart attack." As we move out to the racquetball court, I ask the guard, "Why can't you say he died of a drug overdose?"

"Because he died of a heart attack."

"Wasn't he on drugs?"

"The drugs may have affected his heart and that might have been connected to the heart attack."

"Was he an addict?"

"I really don't think you can call him that."

Just then two guards corner me.

"What are you wanting?"

"What'd you just ask the security guard back there?"

"About the drugs."

"You're taking notes?"

"Yeah, I'm a fan."

After they kicked me out, I went to a bar to use the men's room. The graffiti on the wall reads:

"If Elvis was so cool, how come he was buried in

**1:15 AM (11:15 PM PST)—**  
Soundgarden's muck-  
mashing crowd smashes the  
I-Beam in San Francisco's  
Haight-Ashbury.



**4:34 PM—Before an evening performance at the Atlantic City Convention Center, the Rolling Stones give a press conference. Donald Trump took the stage, hoping to share it with the Stones, but no one in the group would go onstage until Trump stepped down. No photo op for Don.**

the backyard like a pet hamster?"

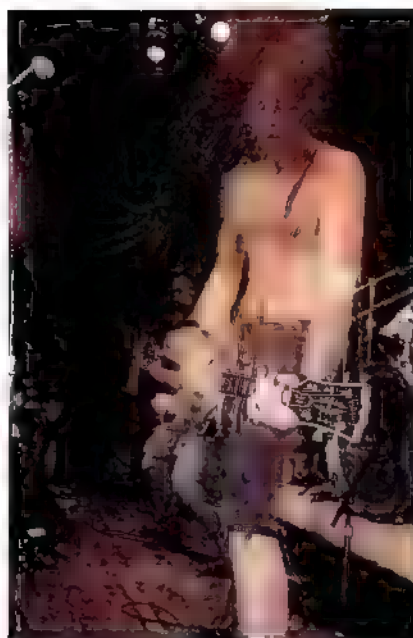
And the answer is: "Because he was too fat to flush down the toilet."

**4:15 PM—(1:15 PM PST)—Sound Studio, New Line Pictures—Marina Del Rey, California.**

The girl in the flared pink party frock steps through the door and into the living room crowded with carousing teens. "Sincerely," the smooth Moonglows doo-wop playing just a moment before, fades quickly.

"Rolling," somebody shouts, and New Line's latest production, "Jack in the Box," springs to life.

Spit-curls firmly in place, I grasp my Coca-Cola and try to look natural. I should have been named "Miss Congeniality" the way I'm gabbing



with this broad-shouldered kid who looks like Wally Cleaver's circle-jerk chum. But I'm just going through the motions. I am one of several dozen extras playing generic Pennsylvania steel town teens at the hottest party of senior year.

Unlike the other kids on the set who routinely answer casting calls in search of fortune and fame, I showed up at New Line that morning to interview the key off-screen players. They asked me to be an extra.

So, after a half-hour in the makeup trailer and exchanging blue jeans for capri pants, I sweat out my screen debut. Meanwhile, Miss Popularity sidles past boys in leather jackets and ducktails and approaches the intoxicated young hunk who launched this wingding while his parents were out of town.

"You have wild parties," she smiles sweetly, turning her angelic face toward him. "Do you wanna dance?"

**4:27 PM—Churchill's Hideaway—Miami, Florida.**

In an English pub on a Haitian street, a Dominican singer and his Cuban band are sharing their all-American dream.

"If just one Miami rock band makes it, not just us but any real rock band from Miami, it could open the flood gates for everybody." Fro Sosa claims, as faith shines in his clear black eyes.

Then comes the Miami mantra: "That's how it happened in Athens."

**4:31 PM—Newton, Massachusetts.**

The members of Dogzilla sit in the living room of Darkworld watching cartoons and waiting for Fudge, the drummer, to show up for rehearsal. He's late.

For nine years now, Darkworld's kitchen has played host to a number of bands: The Dark, Til Tuesday, Life on the Edge, Death in Venice and Dogzilla. Darkworld's location, a small commercial-industrial section of Newton, is ideal because there are few neighbors to be disturbed by loud rehearsals. But it still gets through.

"Ach, we hear the bass—boom, boom, boom," a distracted man working in Barca's Spa groans, nodding his head.

**4:34 PM—Convention Center—Atlantic City, New Jersey.**

Apparently, no one knew about the press conference. As of one hour before the media event was slated to begin, the PR people of Trump Plaza responded bitterly to queries about the conference's location and time. These matters had been snatched out of their qualified hands. "We just don't know, all right?" Click.

Only Bennett Kleinberg, PR man for the Rolling Stones, knew what was going on. It was Kleinberg's conference, after all. He has his Rolling Stones "Steel Wheels Tour" sweatshirt on, festooned with his googleplex credentials on a swinging metal chain. He culled through his phone messages from the plaintive press and leaked his rare stock of Stones information and official press kits to those he deemed worthy. He reviewed his choices again as the film crews from South Jersey news stations lined single-file between the adhesive demarcations.

Kleinberg leans on a black box and looks rankled. "I don't know why these TV people stake their reporters out to catch a glimpse of Jagger." He directs his gaze and venom toward a pod of media around the British man. "What a waste of time! They must be the low man on the totem pole to get that assignment."

**4:45 PM—South Carolina State Park Correction Center—Richland County, South Carolina.**

Back in the kitchen, the Godfather of Soul prepares fried chicken, mashed potatoes, peas, rolls, pears and strawberry Jell-O for dinner.

**5:07 PM—(4:07 CST)—Downtown—Des Moines, Iowa.**

Out-of-town acts that tour the club scene in the Midwest steer clear of Des Moines. To them, Iowa stands for "I Oughta Went Around."

**5:23 PM—South Amboy Local—South Amboy, New Jersey.**

Johnny Winter is playing the Club Bene in South Amboy tonight, and the whole thing makes my heart hang in my chest like a canned ham. An unnatural wave of foreboding creeps through the coach. The Club Bene is a few miles outside of town on Route 35, too far out to walk, a half-mile up a sand hill from a sour, poison inlet of lower New York Harbor—the end of a 1,000-mile skid mark off the edge of nowhere. In keeping with the tradition of dance halls strewn along the weekend edge of America's factory farms and plastic extrusion mills, it's the only place within a 50-mile radius to catch live rock'n'roll on a Friday night.

As the snow begins to rip by in the wind out beyond the edge of the darkness, both Johnny and this piss-poor reality need a whole lot of saving.

But you couldn't get another person in here with a crowbar. It's a cheap crowd, running a tight spectrum from straight blue-collar guys in sweaters to shop hands in their Harley vests and Stetsons and longjohn T-shirts. Men to women, it's about seven to one. Average age is about 28. The Club Bene was transformed into Gilley's El Norte. They look kind of surly, like this wasn't their first choice of things to do on a Friday night, but it was safe—a straight thing for the guys to do together. There was beer, and, as I said,

Jay Bickelberg

Karen Mazar/London Features



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there wasn't another fuckin' thing to do for 50 miles.

**5:30 PM—Flood Zone—Richmond, Virginia.**

The Good Guys whipped into "Right Back at You" during their sound check. The horns wailed, the bass throbbed, Jimi Gore sweated. The executive types unwinding at the bar hollered for more.

While Tom Brokaw did his segment on hard rock college on his TV broadcast, White Heat unloaded their equipment.

The sun went down. It got cold. Dirt Woman, Richmond's replacement for Divine, strolled down Grace Street in "the battle zone" outside Newgate. Friday night was officially underway.

**5:42 PM—Capitol Records—New York City.**

"All ask the same questions, don't they," Nick whispers to Simon as they wait for the lift. Can't really blame Duran Duran for not getting all fired up over a greatest-hits album. To them, it's just the "old stuff" with a different cover design.

"You seeing that Beatle this evening, then" Nick asks Simon.

"Who? Paul McCartney? Yeah," Simon replies, entered the lift. "John's going, Are you?" "God," Nick mutters. "No. I don't think so."

By this point, John had gone back to the hotel, probably to take a nap. "I think John took the black limo," one of their managers comments.

"Bastard! Leaving us the brown one," Simon steams.

"Well, fuck," Nick intones. "I'd rather take a taxi."

"Oh, come on," the manager says. "It's not

**Tray Stokes, a dancer with a local rapper, M.O.D., stands stone still in a shadowy corner, shading his face under a bulky fur hat. He's got a big reputation. But there's heavy competition on the Fevers floor.**

brown; it's grey."

Two limos wait in front. The managers get in theirs and we in ours. Central Park looks great from the back of a limo. All the lights are sharp, and the evening sky crisp and clear, cold. Simon makes rap noises and Nick checks out the loot he picked up from the record company.

"I wonder if I'm in this one . . ."

**6:00 PM—(5:00 PM CST)—Office of Dr. Bop & The Headliners—Chicago, Illinois.**

"When you listen to this, you'd better sit down because it rocks you off your feet!" cautions bandleader/drummer Dr. Newt Bop, who in real life is named Mike Riegel. But this isn't real life.

The song on the cassette is "Bongo Madness," goofy samples of the word "bongo" recited

over a musical bed reminiscent of the "Gimme Shelter" intro, which had just been submitted to the Library of Congress for copyright approval, but the Library of Congress has already rejected it twice.

**6:00 PM—The Flats—Cleveland, Ohio.**

The silver lining of the great White-Out is that the airport was shut down and the Village People were forced to cancel their exclusive engagement at Club Coconuts in The Flats. See, there is a God.

This is no ordinary squall. We eat those for breakfast. This the Big White. All city workers were sent home at three in the afternoon. The weather advisory read something like: "IF YOU'RE NOT HOME, GO HOME. IF YOU ARE HOME, STAY HOME." Divine intervention is our only hope.

Luckily my four wheel drive is just back from the shop, where it was repaired after being stolen and stripped—car theft being tantamount to an Olympic event around here. In fact, the return of the vehicle today was doubly fortunate, because my rental was stolen last night. In any case, we were a mobile unit.

Armed with only a three-dollar bottle of Taylor Port (for medicinal purposes, you know), Amy and I roll around downtown looking for some signs of life. Through the Wall of White all we can see are the dim lights of emergency vehicles tending to every type of disaster. It doesn't look good for the home team. . . .

**6:45 PM—(4:45 PM MST)—Backyard ramp—Scottsdale, Arizona.**

Brian Brannon, singer for Jodie Foster's Army,



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the best skate-punk band ever, woke up and decided it was perfect skating weather. Two days ago, his buddy Steve Alba (that's Lord Salba to you) UPS'ed him two Santa Cruz decks of considerable width. Brannon makes a few phone calls and hooks up with a backyard ramp rat for a serious night-time session in a prestigious Scottsdale neighborhood. Floodlights cut through the stinky air onto the backyard boards, Brannon throws himself onto one of the Santa Cruzes and hums all over the plywood. Before anyone else gets there, he snaps his body into a signature trick—the fakey hood ornament rock'n'roll.

Then he shoots down the ramp, pushes off the bottom from a crouch and hangs the deck (which has a skinned snake-man on the underside) on the coping. Reaching behind him, he lifts his right leg backwards, grabs his right foot over his head, and hangs there like a Mercedes peace sign.

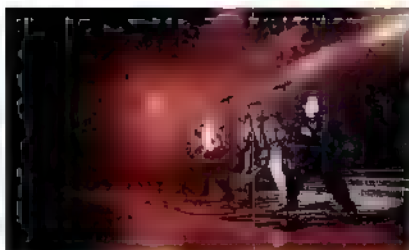
Yeah, just bronze him and put him on the end of a gold chain.

After about a week or so, he sails back into the bowl.

**7:00 PM—(5:00 PM MST)—Atomic Theater—Albuquerque, New Mexico.**

In a city where the country and music clubs are the size of football fields, the closest thing to a national act is an Elvis impersonator from Memphis, who appeared downtown at a concert bar called El Rey (which, interestingly, was originally a movie theater built by a descendent of the composer Puccini).

But it wasn't happening, so we went to check



out the kids at the under-21 Atomic Theater. The boys and girls in the lobby, in long hair and leather, are hanging out drinking natural soda and gobbling M&M's. Onstage Brain Erosion are playing their first gig.

It's intense, but well done. Later, Brian's 16-year-old guitarist, clad in a "Marty the Mutant" T-shirt designed at a local skate shop, slam dances to the sounds of the Dallas band U2. "It's not as bad as it looks," he says, "'cause when you're in it, you just go with the flow."

**7:05 PM—Holiday Inn—Cheshire, Connecticut.**

It's the kind of gig you dream about, then wake up screaming. Only two people from the company whose Christmas party we've been hired to play have shown up. Unlike the beery hardwood clubs where our rock'n'roll band normally spends its Friday nights, this Holiday Inn is a metropolitan Connecticut model with waterfalls. When some of the partygoers finally do arrive, most look pretty square, so we suck in our guts and decide that a set of swing and samba is the only way out alive.

By the second break, we can't stop laughing at how wretched this is. Two young women sink in, dressed to kill.

"I hear it's just a jazz trio and it ain't happenin'," says one.

"It's a quintet," I reply. "But you're right, it ain't happenin'."

Realizing she just mouthed off in front of the band, she runs off with her companion in search of the big beat. We were rock'n'roll chattel, as important as fruit cup.

**7:45 PM—(6:45 PM CST) Phone booth—Madison, Wisconsin.**

There are only eight entries in the "Night Clubs" section of the Yellow Pages.

One of them is the city's only strip club.

Another is an incorrect phone number for the "hotline" at a club that went belly-up years ago.

Only one on the list features live music. It's a bowling alley.

**7:51 PM—Downtown—Lexington, Kentucky.**

Rock'n'roll isn't dead, it's merely buried under a half-foot of snow. And if that isn't enough, Lexington's two most formidable bands—Velvet Elvis and the Metropolitan Blues All Stars—have braved the weather enough to handle gigs out in the state. The downtown nightspots, usually inundated by weekend crowds, have found themselves with, at most, 50 patrons. You could go into any club in town, order a drink and actually find yourself a chair. Shoot, you could even have a couple of tables to yourself.

*Continued on page 76*

10:37 PM (7:37 PM PST)—Early enough that no one will miss her bedtime, New Kids on the Block give great show at LA's Universal Studios Amphitheater for a swarm of swooning teens many of whom were pleased to learn that Donnie Wahlberg "ain't no fag."



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Character.



11:00 PM—*Ramones* break new ground at New York's *The Ritz*, or rather, *Ramones* display the ground they once broke.



Bob Gruen

Continued from page 73

**8:00 PM—Frankie's New Beginnings—Toledo, Ohio.**

"This is the worst day of my life," club owner Robert Croak says, planting himself in a booth at Frankie's New Beginnings on Toledo's east side, and pushing back his Axl Rose-style head gear.

The sound system went haywire, a house DJ quit the night before, and the worst weather conditions have wiped out the Friday-night crowd.

**8:05 PM—Charleston Civic Center—Charleston, West Virginia.**

Aerosmith chose Charleston, West Virginia, as the tour's starting point, and news of each Aerosmith "sighting" spread quickly: buying running shoes at the mall, working out at a health club.

In a city that hasn't played host to a full-blown concert in almost six months, the Aerosmith/Skid Row show is both celebration and release.

Toward the end of Skid Row's set, singer Sebastian Bach encourages 10,000 future farmers to scream at a fictitious establishment figure who had given him a hard time about his rock'n'roll.

"Suck my dick!" the crowd yells.

"What?" Bach asks, playfully tossing his blonde mane from side-to-side.

"SUCK MY DICK!" they yell even louder. The boys and girls are eager to please.

**8:15 PM—Antan's 1201 Club—Washington, DC.**

"I always make sure my shoes look absolutely perfect before I go onstage," Little Anthony says as he stands in the kitchen doorway wringing his hands like a nervous groom, waiting for the call to go onstage. Anthony has been performing in nightclubs since he was 17, but he still gets nervous, so his way of dealing with the nervousness is to channel it into compulsive grooming, flattening his hair with his hands and smoothing the last wrinkles from his black dinner jacket over and over. At least his shoes aren't a problem.

"Some people, all they look at is your shoes."

The opening lines of Anthony's first song, "Tears On My Pillow" could stand as his own epitaph: "You don't remember me, but I remember you."

**8:17 PM—Greene Street Studios—New York City.**

In a ratty SoHo bar, Sonic Youth's Steve Shelley and I rip into a couple of black bean quesadillas. Outside, it's cold and wet, but at least it didn't snow the six inches predicted. It rained eight.

"I can't believe it's Friday night," Steve says, "and people are going out and stuff. And I'm going into same room."

We walk back to Greene Street Studios, where the Sonics are working on their new album, *Blowjob*. Chuck D answers the door.

"Hey, what's goin' on."

"Hey, yeah, what's up."

Sonic Youth are sharing the studio with Public Enemy.

**8:03 PM—Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.**

Mike Whited, the 24-year-old manager of the 11th Hour was gazing balefully at the worn red carpet. Band member Shawn Hamson left his day job in Oakland, Pennsylvania at 3:00 PM to drive 30 miles to get his guitars for the sound check.

Shawn finally made it home—five hours later, because of the snow: seven inches stopped traffic dead by rush-hour. There was no way he could make it back from the boonies in time for the gig. That leaves opening acts Fusebox and the Clarks to carry on.

**8:45 PM—Maser's—Cleveland, Ohio.**

"So what's with this fucking video?" I ask Gary from California Speedbag in Otto Maser's Bar and Grill.

"The guy with the sleazy women cancelled..."

"Why?"


"It turned out all the sleazy women he picked were in AA, and they decided at the last minute they didn't wanna come to a bar."

**8:57 PM—Portland, Maine.**

"This town needs a battle-of-the-bands competition," Ghostwalks guitarist George Ripley says, flicking a cigarette ash in his open palm while sitting behind the counter at Suitsmi.

The Ghostwalks are practicing in a spare room at Suitsmi, a vintage clothing/costume/rock'n'roll wear shop in the Westport district. The band is planning to record





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a third album and has written to Jello Biafra to ask if he'd be interested in producing.

"Yeah, a battle-of-the-bands competition. This town sure needs something."

**9:01 PM—(6:01 PM PST)—Delicious Vinyl Studio—Los Angeles, California.**

Matt Dike, co-founder and multi-platinum artistic guru of Delicious Vinyl records, at home in bed, telephones the studio to listen to the latest mix of the new album he's producing. It plays for him through a dusty Cobra speakerphone. That's how Matt produced Tone-Loc, Young MC and the Beastie Boys.

When he's finished, he calls Apollo, a singer he's friends with who sounds like a bright-eyed, earnest hippie. Dike is producing Apollo's debut album; and, musically, he's in love.

"I have all my heart in it!" he says into the speakerphone

**9:08 PM—Club Nu—Miami, Florida.**

The featured entertainment is the Chicago Knockers, billed as "Large Breasted Women That Oil Wrestle!"

**9:14 PM—(8:14 PM CST)—Saenger Performing Arts Center—New Orleans, Louisiana.**

The Red Hot Chili Peppers are getting ready to take the stage at the Saenger. The beaux arts theatre is filled to capacity with dyed black-haired teenagers, and, by the start of the second tune, a crushing wave of stage divers rushes the band. A phalanx of beefy security men remain onstage for the rest of the show. If this were a club with ample dance space, there wouldn't be a problem. But chairs are getting in the way, and roadies are hauling off torn furniture carcasses. Through it all, the Chili Peppers keep rapping, but after about an hour of mayhem, the

**9:29 PM—(6:29 PM PST)—West Hollywood, California.**

Inside Sunset Strip Tattoos, right off the Boulevard, a red-faced beery guy in a tank-top flips through enormous racks of thousands of designs to choose from: slick interpretations of Japanese technique; naked women; Harley-Davidson Americana; Monopoly figures. ...

"I can bury my fear by creating a talisman/deity/familiar to insulate myself from my fears," says Robert Benedetti, proprietor of the unassuming wooden shop for 13 years, slicking back his long blond ponytail. "I can confront the fact that I'm mortal by putting a skull on me. I can absorb the qualities of a powerful entity."

"Hey Mike," he yells out to one of the staffers. "Come in here and snip!"

Mike pulls up his shirt to reveal an example of the large-scale Americanized Japanese work Benedetti is known for—a green demon crouching beneath a reddish Samurai, who leans against Mike's spine brandishing a sword. "It's the triumph of good over evil—a very American theme," Benedetti says. "All Men are Brothers," is inked in Japanese characters to the left; "Mom," in Japanese, is inside a red heart over Mike's triceps.

In the front room, Steve prepares to etch an eagle's head on a client who reclines nervously in a tattered old dentist chair. He positions the buzzing needle over the boy's skinny chest and carefully lowers blade into flesh. Steve's straight blond hair falls in front of his glasses, which he casually flips aside.

"See? Just like a cat scratch," he says. I was reminded of how a junkie friend once told me she sometimes felt she might have been just as happy shooting lemonade: the needle itself was the locus of erotic fixation.

**9:31 PM—Lily's—Pontiac, Michigan.**

I walk down a long, slender alley to a back door, in the proudly Polish suburb of Hamtramck, and there sitting on a chair is Lily, holding court and collecting the admission. Four bucks, and the headlining act is an energetic, 60s-inspired quartet called See Dick Run.

The room is medium-sized and cozy, with a low, pressed-tin ceiling and low, round tables. I squeeze past the long, old wooden bar to get a look at one of the most varied juke boxes in the state of Michigan, and nearly fall into a string of 20 balloons proclaiming "It's a Boy!"

"We had a baby shower here on Thursday," Lily explains.

**9:35 PM—Paradise Rock Club—Boston, Massachusetts.**

"It's not going to be a very busy night for us," says Axis manager Jonathan Cheriff.

"Usually Sunday nights and Tuesday nights are our big nights. No one knows why those two nights, but that's the way things go."

**9:42 PM—(8:42 CST)—Apparel Center Holiday Inn—Chicago, Illinois.**

Tawny of the "Fabulous Valendez Sisters of Port Trinidad, Spain" is getting into her evening gown as her sister Pena shields her from the drunks backstage pissing in beer bottles. Nearby, bartender Mr. Chan, known as the "Incredible Human Surfboard," waits for the

band to start so he can get down on all fours and let the drunken babes stand on his back and "surf" him during "Wipeout."

**10:00 PM—South Carolina State Park Correction Center—Richland County, South Carolina.**

Lights out for James Brown and a couple hundred other prisoners.

**10:09 PM—Raul's Roadside Attraction—Portland, Maine.**

The place was rockin' a good half hour before the amps were plugged in.

Portland's the kind of town where two people with a case of beer constitute a wing-ding, and a wedding reception is tantamount to Woodstock.

The headliner is the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, and downstairs the pool tables are generously integrated with Minnesota Lean pretenders and women in paint-by-number jeans. Though not exactly electric, the atmosphere has a caged-ope feeling.

**10:14 PM—Fever's—Raleigh, North Carolina.**

Bright, blinking lights come to life over Grand Master Slice, maker of the hip hop hit "Shall We Dance," as he takes the stage.

Bodies slide across the floor, leaping in the air, shaking and twisting so that every muscle seems plugged into an electric outlet.

This is the proving ground, the place where local dancers make their name. Tray Stokes stands stone still in a shadowy corner, shading his face under a bulky fur hat. Stokes, 15, is a dancer with local rapper, M.O.D. He's got a big reputation. But there's heavy competition on the Fever's floor.

It's better to scope it first, step later.

**10:19 PM EST—(8:19 PM MST)—Boulder Theater—Boulder, Colorado.**

Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, a small, wiry 65-year-old Louisiana bluesman is dressed all in black, topped off by a cowboy hat. He has a cheese sandwich in his weathered hands, and takes an occasional sip of orange juice. Finishing the food, he reaches for his pipe (which he uses like a baton to conduct his band) and lights up.

"I'm a sheriff back home in Louisiana, did I tell you that?" He pulls out his badge from Tammany Parish to prove it. Tammany Parish must be one wild and woolly place, because Gatemouth is away from home 11 months out of the year, and that ain't exactly Borkum Riff he's got in his pipe.

"Everyone should support their local sheriff," he says, pointing with his pipe. "Write that down."

Through the closed door, we hear Gatemouth's band starting up again. It's time for him to get back to work. Taking one last puff, he pucks his pipe and lighter away.

"Enjoy the music."

**10:25 PM—South Amboy Local—South Amboy, New Jersey.**

Without warning, the lights go down, the curtain jerks up and out bounds Johnny Winter like the twisted, confident shaman of the Good 'Ol Boy Tribe of Texas: that beautiful, platinum hair sweeping his ass in a perfect ponytail; his hipbones poking through his Levis; tattoos scattered across his scarecrow arms like gorgeous, hypnotic bruises; his eyes closed to the lights, a thin smile.

4:31 PM—Practicing in the kitchen at apartment-turned-studio *Barkworld*, in Newton, Massachusetts, *Dogzilla* follow in the path of *Til Tuesday*, *Death in Venice*, *Tin Machine*'s Reeves Gabrel and many others. *Barkworld* gets its name from the first band that used it, *The Bark*.



authorities pull the plug. Seems the management at the beautiful old Saenger Performing Arts Center isn't hip to downstage backflips.

**9:27 PM—Upstage—Oakland, Pennsylvania.**

The Clarks take the stage and roll through a cover of "Paint It Black," like a truck on the long downhill of Pittsburgh's parkway.



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Polite applause. Johnny immediately launches into a blues stomp that has too much bite to just sit and nod to. He lifts his head and the power trio gets loud. The bass player turns up. Johnny doesn't even look at the crowd. I don't know if Johnny has something to prove—a bad case of the blues, a good shot of medicine, whatever—but that silly Steinberger he plays is aching. It's too much for the guys at the table next to me: they jump up, tear their bandanas off and start sloshing vodka on each other like born-again idiots. With the general reaction of shock and surprise, I start to feel a little better.

Johnny steps up to the mike and growls, "Now, I don't need no woman to tell me what to do..." and the half of the crowd that didn't respond to the first song is on their feet howling. There is some fucking hope... How could Johnny play like this? He looks like he should be in a clinic in Mazatlan, and he's burning the place down. By the time he turns way up and slams into "Schoolboy Blues," Johnny isn't just pokin' around with the blues: this is rock'n'roll. He starts to grin. Angels are soulsinging in the rafters. I am standing on my chair. A couple hundred pairs of boots stomp all over the Club Bene, practically moshing over in our corner. Johnny leans into the fray, the two gaping rattlesnake heads on his hat hissing "fuck your low-spark, rotten lives, you fuckin' psychotic neanderthals," and they just scream back, "Fuckin' A, dude! Fuck it all!"

**9:32 AM—Motley Crüe at the Centrum in Worcester, Massachusetts, being the best they apparently can hope to be.**



**5:00 PM—ZRock 104's drive-time DJ Steve G. types the Twin Cities underground on this "progressive kinda underground" station.**

**10:34 PM—(9:34 CST)—Thornburg's Roadhouse—Wadesville, Indiana.**

On home turf as Christmas nears, the Beat Daddys are working a one pool table road house called Thornburg's.

It was one-below zero before the gig started and a few Hoosiers living on the Kentucky border braved the arctic air, but no more than 35 people were on hand at any time.

The Beat Daddys size the crowd and seize



the moment. It feels like Johnny Winter and Carl Perkins meet Bob Seger and Mitch Rider.

Nothing flashy, just big guitars, big drums and funky whiteboys.

**10:37 PM—(7:37 PM PST)—Universal Studios Amphitheater—North Hollywood, California.**

The joke of the week is: "What has 100 legs and no pubic hair? The first row on a New Kids on the Block concert."

This evening's concert bears the unmistakable stench of the coming apocalypse. On a fairy-tale backdrop where everything is literally a facade, 3,000 mall children gather to worship at the altar of mass marketing. Past the Power 106 mobile van, past the ticket booth where two tearful girls from San Jose explain that they drove seven hours to deliver their roses to the New Kids, past the stalls with the \$30 sweat shirts, over the moat and through the big doors, past the parents' lounge and into the Pit, the girls wait with nervous chatter and enough repressed sexual energy to power Las Vegas for a month. Every sizzling roadie, every modulation of the lights, brings a shriek from the audience and a thundering surge from the women's room door.

In front of the stage, a battalion of girls waits to offer their notes, flowers and stuffed animals to the funky little twerps they had come to love.

"Donnie, Drool On Me!" exclaims a placard in the clutches of a pre-teen.

Before the festivities, a master of ceremonies steps onstage to hype the band's "900-line" (which the crowd knows by heart, chanting it in unison with the emcee), and to identify which New Kid would be using which microphone and to ask that all love offerings be given to the nice stagehands rather than thrown at the boys. Then there's fanfare, and all hell breaks loose.

The objects of this adoration are the most cunningly calculated teen phenomena since their former tour-mate, Tiffany. There's no denying their athleticism, their spunk or their shamelessly effective thievery of black style. This is a band naive enough to admit in a 1988

interview that they were specifically recruited to be a white Jackson Five. (There will never be a black New Kid.) To that end, they rap (poorly), they enact elaborate dance routines (moderately well) and they sport expensive gym shoes.

For such a cuddly, eager-to-please bunch, they also add an element of johnson-awareness that is just to the left of playful. Donnie Wahlberg, a budding producer and the Kid Most Likely to Have a Solo Career, gets extra points here, as he does for his occasional outbursts of crankiness. ("I ain't no fag," he mutters at one point, after emphasizing how much he loves all the girls.)

**10:43 PM—(9:43 PM CST)—Ratskellar—Madison, Wisconsin.**

I'm at the front table and an entire semester's worth of notes for four classes lie in front of broken pretzel sticks and stale beer. Let's face it, the library is no place to study. As I glance up, my glazed eyes focus on a group of huskies loading equipment onto the Ratskellar stage. Sound check. Lighting. Juke box unplugged. I'm in for a rough couple hours of study.

The band, Minneapolis's Gear Daddies, starts playing and for the first few minutes the crowd continues to discuss leftist dogma. As the music progresses and the flowing pedal steel guitar seep in, everyone begins to warm up. Dancing takes over the front half of the Rat, and the exact year of defeat of the Spanish Armada was the last thing on anyone's mind. History and philosophy books are tossed onto the popcorn and beer-soaked floor. A nun breaks out into song. Brain cells evaporate by the billions.

**10:52 PM—Loft Party—New York City.**

It is an Art and AIDS benefit. On the tables are fried pork rinds, spicy chips and cans of Lite beer. On the wall is a sign that says, "Pregnant? We Can Kill It" and a letter to some editor expressing horror that 23 million Americans have been aborted since 73.

The people here evidently survived. One tie-dye-besotted person dances frantically with himself to Madonna's "Act of Contrition"—possibly the least danceable song ever recorded, though this guy's life mission is to prove it isn't. "Linda Evans is the godmother of style," says a sweated Caucasian in the course of conversation. Someone points to a guy in white jeans and says, "They're the new thing, aren't they?" and his friend responds, "I don't think they're really all that new."

"Burning Up" by Ciccone Youth booms as a photographer who recently shot me for a magazine says, "We chose the photo of you where most of your face is covered."

Great. Flawless. One more pork rind. Time to leave.

At the Big Hunt Club, a small, high-ceilinged hangout in the West Village, the doorman says, "I hope you're not going to write that I dragged you in this time."

No, this time I'm here of my own volition, though I'm not all too sure what I'm hunting for, or why.

The place is a study in contradictions. A lot of the clientele are in suits and dresses; yet, as part of the early reign of terror decor, there's a motorcycle against the wall. The exposed





5:42 PM—*Buran Buran*—  
photo shoots, limo  
squabbles, post-modern  
canini. This is rock'n'roll?

industrial pipes and Van Halen music are mixed in with a certain minimalist elegance, but I guess it's not all that incongruous: the place is a wild-at-heart Wall Street trader's wet dream come true. Some nights, rockers love it too—the Stones, Debbie Harry, and various Thompson Twins and Kisses have been here—but some nights ain't tonight. "Was this a book signing?" asks someone else as I walk toward the door. I don't know what it was. Difficult questions are the last thing one needs at this hour. A screwdriver for the road and it's mobilization.

At Red Zone, the "club kid" hangout on West 54th Street, the real fun tonight isn't on the cavernous dance floor, where they're playing "Make My Day" and "Back To Life"—two demands it's fair to make from any club. It's in a small, winding back room, where an audacious guy (and speller) named Filloyyddd is having a champagne opening of his art, which is clearly designed to exterminate the Jesse Helmses of the world with seizures. There's a picture of Jesus with his genitals in a knot; a collage containing a jockstrap, a condom and various bodily fluids, and a 3-D piece of work with a topless woman adorned only with the word "Wet." "You should smile," a multi-colored girl screams at me. I thought I was.

10:57 PM—*The Flats*—Cleveland, Ohio.

After Amy attempted to open the car door and had it ripped off the hinge by a gale-force gust, we decided to repair back to my apartment for safety and serious thought. All we could come up with was a picture of me, dressed like an Eskimo pimp, holding a guitar, standing down by the lake with a caption that would read: "Since



nothing was going on, I went down to Lake Erie and played 'Maggot Brain' for four hours, as I do every year on December 15th."

11:00 PM—(8:00 PM PST)—*Coleman Jane's Nashville Nevada*—Las Vegas, Nevada.

An hour before Donny Osmond's appearance at the place with bras and panties hanging from the rafters, the good seats were gone, occupied by eager women and reluctant men.

They are adults now, but those teeny-bopper feelings, buried and presumably dead—not unlike the performer they had come to see—have been resurrected in a brilliant flash of big white teeth.

"DOOOOOOONNNNNNY!"

Those who swooned as sweet and innocent little girls, now squeal as adults. The men sit red-faced, embarrassed, neither applauding nor acting too enthusiastically.

"Hey, can we go to the dressing room and jump his bones?" a woman asks the bartender.

"I still have every one of his albums," another one says.

"Are you really that hung up on him?" her

male companion inquires, "Do you want to get close enough to smell him?"

"Touch him," she answers.

Next, a woman appears with a rose and purple socks, presents intended for Donny, and a poem. It reads, "Donny, when Marie was going country and you were singing rock, you had yourself a trademark, which was wearing purple socks. Now answer me this question, 'cause I'm curious to know, if you're wearing purple socks as you play this Vegas show?"

11:05 PM—(8:05 PM PST)—*Downtown*—San Diego, California.

In rapid succession, phone calls were made to Mojo Nixon and head Beat Farmer Country Dick Montana, to see what was happening. But nada. Turns out the Farmers are out of town, while Mojo and Dick are in Las Vegas escorting the 23-year-old female winner of *Tower Records/Pulse Magazine's "24 Hours in Hell With Mojo & Country Dick"* contest.

"We saw a bunch of shows and drank a bunch of drinks," says Mojo after his escort.

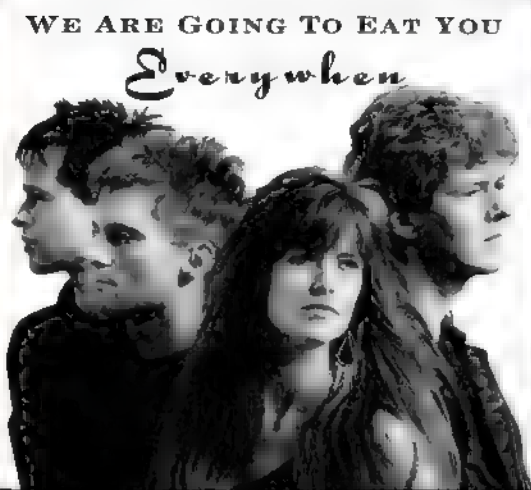
"For Lori from the city of Orange, probably the highlight was visiting the Liberace museum during 20 hours while under the influence of a fungus indigenous to the mountains of Mexico. Jesus Christ! The effect was overwhelming."

"Any trip to Las Vegas is made worthwhile by the Liberace experience," agrees Country Dick. "You can't have a more intense experience in America, especially when you're on mushrooms. But we kept our hands off the winner. She was in no condition... she was nothing but a puddle by the time I saw her. We poured her back on the plane."



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But, guys, what about rock'n'roll in San Diego? Does it exist?

"That's one of the good things about San Diego," Country Dick says. "There are limitations on your nightlife. If I lived in New York or LA, I'd be dead by now."

**11:21 PM—(10:21 PM CST)—Wichita, Kansas.**

At the Coyote Club on the north edge of town, the Fabulous Shitheads, one of the city's finest party bands, are cranking up the sound, telling bad jokes and practicing the Pony onstage.

With a cheap imitation of an Elvis painting on black velvet hanging from a speaker stack, the Shitheads play covers of the best of party rock from the 60s and 70s, while dancers in jeans and sweaters crowd the black-and-white checkered linoleum dance floor.

"We found it behind some bar," Shitheads bassist Mike Fleming says of the toilet perched onstage.

"It had crabs and so we took it."

"Bowling alleys and strip joints are the pinnacle we aspire to."

**11:30 PM—Sardi's—New York City.**

Rejoining the world I'm expected to be in, I go to Sardi's, the famous Broadway theater crowd restaurant, for Paul and Linda McCartney's closing night party—an intimate affair—a private upstairs room. With band, family and friends, including Dustin Hoffman, Sting, Penny Marshall, Paul Simon, Twiggy, Peter Boyle and of course a vegetarian spread ("Nothing with a face or a heart" were the instructions given the caterers). Linda is enthusiastic about having just met the saintly Dan Mathews of PETA

**"Rock'n'roll is more than just music or how you play. It's the way you dress or how you get up in the afternoon."**

**—Mike Ivins, *Flamin' Lips***

(People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), and together they concoct the idea of her speaking to the people at VISA, the tour's corporate sponsor, about not allowing VISA cards to be used for the purchase of fur coats. "I don't know if that will get very far," she admits. "Well, we did it." Paul says with a big grin, speaking of whatever his latest achievement was—the North American tour? ... the show that night? ... the New York run? ... the catering?

**11:41 PM—(10:14 PM CST)—Birmingham, Alabama.**

The truth is that the Nick isn't crowded because Vova Nova is the headline act. Not that Vova Nova are a bad band. It's probably Birmingham's best. But since they are a local group, people figured, "Why go see them on a night as freezing as this when I can see them anytime?"

The main topic of conversation is the blistering show the Red Hot Chili Peppers gave last night at the UAB Arena. The show ended sometime after midnight, and the band spent a few minutes shooting baskets in the arena, which

is home to basketball at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Some at the Nick wonder how Flea could have played anything after the spill he took onstage. He lost his footing while jumping onto the drum riser and he landed directly on his nuts. Then explained to the audience that he had "crushed his cock."

Everybody at the Nick agrees it was quite a performance.

**11:42 PM—Elia Gurus—Knoxville, Tennessee.**

The destination sign on the tour bus parked in front of Knoxville's hottest club reads, "All My Children."

Newgrass Revival, the pop bluegrass band that did for traditional string music what the Police did for reggae, are playing a penultimate performance. After the show they're breaking up. They've been "too hip for country, too country for pop" for too long.

Eighteen years was enough. Time to kick back, do some session work. Time to catch up on the soaps.

"Thank ya'll for your suggestions. But we're gonna play what the hell we were aimin' to," and Newgrass launches into a bluegrass version of "Green Acres," sung to "Purple Haze." And then, "a big hit by good ol' country legend, Billy-Bob Marley," a Newgrass version of "One Love, One Heart."

The shouts of "Don't break up!" are to no avail. But Newgrass Revival leaves the crowd in the best concert tradition—begging for more. The finale is a rave-up version of "Great Balls of Fire."

And then, Newgrass rides off into the sunset.



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**11:42 PM—Pop bluegrass band Newgrass Revival decide its not worth the bother. After 18 years of being "too hip for country, too country for pop," they're splitting up.**

**11:48 PM—(10:48 PM CST)—White Water Tavern—Little Rock, Arkansas.**

Over at smokey Juanita's Cantina, Greg "Fingers" Taylor is taking a brief respite from his roadwork with Jimmy Buffett and promoting his own recent MCA album, "Chest Pains."

Taylor, on harmonica, is trading licks and leads with old Memphis pal, guitarist Larry Raspberry.

**12:35 PM—(10:35 PM MST)—Paragon—Aspen, Colorado.**

A band called The Clams from Boulder hop on stage and try their best to wrestle attention away from skiing. There are great guitars and a charismatic lead singer performing killer covers of Skynard and Georgia Satellites tunes, but it's not enough for the audience.

**12:45 AM—L'Amour's—Brooklyn, New York.**

Groffiti in the bathroom reads, "Law and Order rooles," "Skid Row sux," "Fuck all Posers that means you dick" and "All men are sexist pig slob."

An attendant is selling earplugs for \$1.00, Life Savers for 50 cents and hairspray, 50 cents a squirt. Like the bouncers, the attendant doesn't take no shit, either.

A sign is posted on the wall that says, "NO DRINKS ALLOWED! NO WAITING FOR YOUR FRIEND!"

The condom machine has a WSOU sticker on it.

Outside, Anthrax are banging their way through "Indians." They hired Jimmy Gestapo of Murphy's Law and Richie Brikenhead of Underdog to be their stage security guys, and they're doing a good job of not letting kids stagedive—except for Corey Glover of Living Colour, who is jumping off having a fine old time.

Then Anthrax plays a cover of the Sex Pistols' "God Save the Queen" and the metalheads like it as much as the punks.

"NOOO FUU-TUURE! NOOO FUU-TUURE! NOOO FUU-TUURE FOR ME!"

In the back area, a couple of fat girls in leather bustiers are slowly assuming still-life positions. A couple is necking without a whole lot of passion. A girl in a white flouncey dress, very drunk, is bouncing around like she was in a go-go booth and yelling "Bravo!"

**1:00 AM—(11:00 PM MST)—The Zoo—Boise, Idaho.**

"Got to be made out of strong stuff like the 20 mule team Borax to survive as a rocker here."

**1:29 AM—(10:29 PM EST)—Outside the New Orleans Creole Restaurant—Seattle, Washington.**

There's just enough time for a nightcap set at Dimitrou's Jazz Alley, where one of the innovators of 60s soul-jazz, Jimmy McGriff, is at the Hammond B-3 organ.

I jump in my car and head Northeast eight blocks, getting to the uptown club before the set starts. The place is packed, so I wander backstage, where McGriff and his band members are jiving each other about how much they ate. McGriff is so lean, it's hard to believe he's eaten anything in a week, but he swears to the whole room that he's had three meals in the last six hours. Leaving half-eaten dinners and smoldering cigarettes around the dressing room, the quartet hustles back to the bandstand for the last set of a six-night run. As McGriff cranks up those bass pedals and the whirr of the B-3 kicks in, out comes a soulful riff that fuels a flame that keeps me warm until I get home.

**1:30 AM—(12:30 AM CST)—Rockefeller's—Houston, Texas.**

The Roomful of Blues band members hang around just long enough to grab their paychecks, then head across the street to Club Hey Hey to catch the last few tunes of Grady Gaines's show.

**1:42 AM—(10:42 PM PST)—Central Tavern—Seattle, Washington.**

There's a record release party for the band with one of the most obscene names and one of the grungiest sounds in a town known for grunge, the F-Holes. The group doesn't play too often because they have trouble with noise violations and with members ending up in jail. But when they do, expect the spirit of Duane Eddy to rise again.

I don't see Duane, so I drop by the annual benefit sponsored by the local rock stations, KXXR. The station brought The Call to town and sold-out the Moore Theater.

Admission free with cans of food.

The Call are great, though much of the crowd seems to be there to see the station's DJ play in the band that opened the show.

As I drive home, I resist the temptation to stop at any brew pubs on the way, and put on one of my favorite records by a local group—"Beer Money" by Frontier recording artists The Young Fresh Fellows. Then I pop open a couple of cans of Shaeffer—the shittiest beer found all across this great nation—and listen to the entire Mudhoney catalog.

**1:45 AM—Stanley Theater—Utica, New York.**

Retreating to the hotel bar/disco, Bad English field autograph requests from a steady stream of awe-struck blue-collar townies. Even self-confessed tortured artiste Waite interrupts a heated discourse on Beaudelaire, Suicide and the Absurdity Of It All to listen to a stupid joke told by a guy who offered the singer a discount from his family's furniture chain.

I leave the bar to find two earnest teenage girls who tried earlier to get backstage. They are sitting in the lobby waiting to catch a glimpse of the stars on their way to bed. They innocently ask me if the woman Waite has just taken upstairs was his wife.

I don't have the heart to tell them.

**1:50 AM—DC Space—Washington, DC.**

The show at DC Space is, predictably enough, a dud. Most of the crowd are there for a tight local new wave band that wanted us to open for them and use the word "passion" as though it were an article. The weather is shitty for DC, and Alex Chilton is playing a block away. The doorman is letting people in for free. Aside from a dude named Clay, who got up and danced scarecrowy like Roy Bolger on stage and later commandeered our snare drum during the finale, I would forget this show like I've forgotten dozens of others.

A handful of Jon's rich and intelligent friends, including one très haute chick who presents Cristina with a troglodyte biker cap, are about the only other people here to see us. They're polite. We net \$90.

**2:03 AM—Jim Jones's House—Cleveland, Ohio.**

I crunch an old borrowed Buick down an icy street toward the lake. There's a little turnaround at the end. I leave the car there and get out for a look. Ten inches of snow have fallen since morning, but now the snowing has stopped. Below the steep glowing cliff, Lake Erie is a ghostly stretch of frozen white for five hundred yards from shore. Beyond that is darkness, then Canada, and then the North Pole.

**11:21 PM—In a town where howling alleys and strip joints are the height of culture, dancers ignite, as it were, the (iso)leum floors of Wichita's Coyote Club, to the 60s/70s party rock of the Fabulous Shitheads.**







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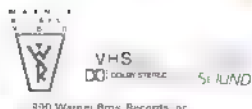
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## Our Best To **Spin** On Their Fifth Anniversary!

Article by Dee Dee Ramone



"Sitting here in Queens, eating refried beans, we're in all the magazines, gulping down thorazines; we ain't got no friends, no Christmas cards to send; Daddy likes men!" . . . and the rest of the story.

I have some earliest memories, but none of them are really too good. I was born in Fort Lee, Virginia, but I grew up in Germany. My parents fought a lot. I remember a lot of other crummy things, and what I did to compensate for it was to live in a fantasy world.

I failed the first grade when I went to school, and I never went back. Actually I tried to go back the next semester. All my friends were going to the second grade, and I had to make a left and go down the hallway to the first grade. They said, "Where ya goin'?" I said, "I'm goin' home."

That was in Munich, at an American army school. But I also lived in Peirmasons, a small town right on the French border. The countryside wasn't as destroyed in Munich. The German side of the border was called the Siegfried Line, and the French side was the Maginot Line. I used to wander around in the old bunkers on the dragon's teeth and look for war relics. I used to pick 'em up all the time, like old helmets, gas masks, bayonets and machine gun belts.

When I lived in Berlin, there was this park, and these old people who used to walk around there would get really upset because every so often a bomb would be found. One day me and my friend Tim found an old mortar shell. We put some smoke bombs in it and walked up to these old people and said "look what we found!" They'd get upset. We would do things like sit down next to an old lady on a bench while she was feeding pigeons—we'd even start feeding the pigeons too—and all of a sudden we pulled out pellet pistols and shot one dead. I did all those things to just get out of myself before I knew about drugs.

#### DRUGS

I started getting high on morphine: they didn't have pot or heroin or anything. I started very young, like 12. I used to trade things like daggers for morphine styrets from some soldiers I knew. I would go up to the shopping center and cop there. They





# MY LIFE AS A RAMONE

so did it in a big plastic bottle and then you would go to the drug store and buy your works. Then you'd go to the department store and get off. The department store was good 'cause it had a nice bathroom.

It's funny but I didn't smoke pot 'til I was like 15 or 16—until I came to America. And I did a lot of glue when I moved to America. I hung out in LeFrak City, in Queens, and I'd do glue and Tuenols and Secrnals. What a party: you couldn't get your head out of that bag. And then we used to call up numbers on the phone, and it would go beep-beep-beep-beep-beep, and we'd listen to that for hours. Then sniff some more glue. We knew these numbers to dial where you could get these weird sounds.

## ROCK AND ROLL

My parents didn't care what I did, as long as I didn't play the guitar in the house. I picked up the guitar when I was around 12. I really wanted to play. I got exposed to rock real early 'cause my mother always liked it. So she would always tell me what to listen to. She told me about the Beatles, Ricky Nelson, everybody. But I don't think I really discovered rock until the Rolling Stones started breaking me away from my mother. I knew my mother couldn't listen to them. When I moved to America, in 1966 or 1967, I heard Jimi Hendrix, and I knew I had my own music.

I was excited about coming to America, but I hated it when I got here. The kids weren't very cool, they didn't dress good. I didn't like the youth culture here because it wasn't very glamorous. Everything seemed to be put out on an assembly line. It's all started at those damn head shops. I just didn't go for it. I always had my own style, especially in the late 60s when I started to go to discoteques—places like The Sanctuary and Tamerlane and Superstar—and I'd get really dressed up, to the hilt.

In the 70s, rock started becoming bands like America and Yes. I hated it. That's when I started getting into the New York Dolls. I had been listening

to blues, like BB King, but finally I discovered the Stooges, and they became my ultimate favorite group. I would just die to go see them. Anytime they ever played, I saw them.

I remember one Stooges show at the Electric Circus. Iggy seemed very upset that night, he just had on a bathing suit or something, and he was all painted gold—his hair and fingernails were gold. He just looked at everybody and said, "you people make me sick." Then he threw up and said some more very nasty things. They played for about a half hour—just three chords—and he just started singing something like "you got my name, I got your number." Scott Ashton turned around. He had on a motorcycle jacket, and there was a big Nazi sign on the back. I thought it was the best thing I'd ever seen.

## MEET THE RAMONES

I first met Johnny on the sidewalk by my house. We were checking each other out, and then we just started talking about the Stooges or something. Tommy and Joey and John and I all lived right next to each other, in those nice apartment buildings in Forest Hills. But I didn't stay at home much. Nobody did.

Johnny had stopped doing hard drugs by then, but he really was a pot smoker. He was the first person to introduce me to really good pot. No one even knew about good pot, but John said "Dee Dee I promise you three tokes of this and you'll be out of it." I said alright—and it would be.

I can't remember much about those days with Joey, except that he and I liked to drink. No one else that I knew liked to drink but Joey. When we started our friendship, we used to get a couple bottles of wine, sit on the stoop and drink all day.

Joey couldn't do drugs. He tried them and he couldn't handle them. He would freak out. One time I saw him smoke some pot and start convulsing on the floor in a fetal position, saying, "I'm freaking out! I'm freaking out!"

## GETTING STARTED

Joey and I were living in a paint store on Queens Boulevard when the Ramones first started. Joey was painting then. He would chop up carrots, lettuce, turnips and strawberries, mix it all together and paint with it. His paintings were very good. Then he would try and make tapes of different sounds. I remember one time, at his parents' apartment on the 20th floor, it was lightning out, and he stuck a mike from the tape recorder out on the balcony to tape the lightning. And the lightning struck the mike and burned everything. Sometimes, he'd have me come over and bounce the basketball for half an hour and he'd tape it. And then we'd listen to it all day in a daze.

I was a mail clerk in an office building. I'd pack up the mail in the morning and sort it out. I had my cart, and I'd have it lined up according to how the desks in the office were organized. I'd drop off the mail and gossip with the people a little bit. Then do it all over again ten times a day and go home and get drunk.

John was a construction worker at 1633 Broadway. I got transferred there, and we'd meet every day for lunch. Usually we'd go over to a go-go place and have a few beers. And after we got a little tipsy we'd go over to 48th Street to Manny's Guitar Store and look at the guitars. Then one day, we both went over, bought guitars and decided to start a band. He bought a Moswright, and I bought a DanElectro.

We got Joey and Tommy right away. I told John I wanted Joey. He said okay. Joey started off by playing drums at the first rehearsal. It took him like two hours to get the drum set ready. I couldn't take it any more, so we just started playing. We stopped after the song, and I looked over at Joey, and he didn't have the stool on the drum stand. He was just sitting on the point. That was our first rehearsal.

We didn't know what to do when we started trying to play. We'd try some Bay City Rollers songs, and we absolutely couldn't do that. We didn't know how so we just immediately started writing our own.

stuff—"I Don't Wanna Walk Around With You" and "Today Your Love." A couple of days later we wrote "I Don't Wanna Go Down To The Basement" and "Loudmouth."

## GIGGING

One of the first gigs we had was in Waterbury, Connecticut. It's a very nasty town—a lot of nasty people there. We were opening for Johnny Winter, and before we went on, this cop who had heard us warming up said, "I really feel sorry for you guys." We said, "What d'you mean?" He went on about us not making it off the stage alive. I started worrying a little, but I didn't know what to expect. Then the lights went on, and everyone was standing up cheering, because they thought we were Johnny Winter. We brought the house down with our entrance. But as soon as we started playing, that crowd turned ugly. I've never got so many bottles or firecrackers or so many people giving me the finger. The people were just so upset with us, and after that we didn't want to play anymore. We said "forget it. This is no fun." But we were too involved to turn back.

In the beginning we were making a fortune, and then all of a sudden, six months later, we were playing all these big places and all the money was going back into the band. I was only making \$125 a week and had a \$100-a-day dope habit.

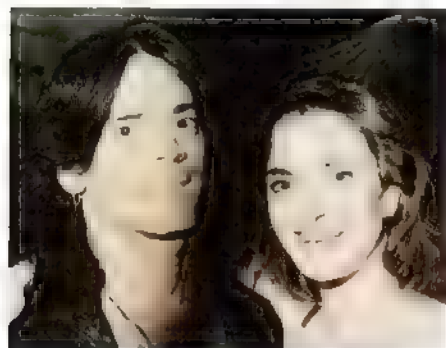
**As soon as we started playing that crowd turned ugly. I've never got so many bottles or firecrackers or so many people giving me the finger.**

I remember the first time I went out of town with the band, and I couldn't cop in the morning. We went up to some awful place in New England on the ocean. It was awful. I was getting sick. It was winter, and it was cold, and afterwards we went back to some flea-bag motel. I was withdrawing. So I took a blanket and put it over the sink, and I started running the water. I sat underneath the sink and just tried to imagine that I was sitting underneath a waterfall.

## PUNK

When we went to England in 1976, things happened fast. It was unbelievable. The record

*"Hey little girl, I wanna be your boyfriend"—Dee Dee and Laura*



company gave us unlimited room service, and I ordered so many bottles of scotch I had a \$700 bill in two days. When they saw the bill, they said, "We just thought you were going to order some cheese sandwiches and coca-cola!" I didn't know any better. I thought I was a huge rock star. I thought that's what I had to do.

Everybody came to our shows, like the Clash and the Pistols. The Sex Pistols were just getting together, and I could tell they were going to have a good band. They seemed to be doing something very fresh—fresher than what the Ramones were doing. It was upsetting me, because they were more glamorous than the Ramones. We were glamorous when we started, almost like a glitter group. A lot of times, Joey would wear rubber clothes and John would wear vinyl clothes, or silver pants. We used to look great, but then we fell into the feather-jacket-and-ripped-up-jeans thing. I felt like a slob. I didn't like it.

## SID VISCIOUS

Sid Viscious used to follow me all over the place. I met him in London, when he wasn't in the Pistols. He was very nice and very innocent. I saw him all the time. The worst time was one night when we had a big party, at a place called Country Cousin or Country Club—where everybody had their parties. It was the summer, and in London there's no air conditioning. They were just serving beer and wine, and everybody was bombed. The whole bathroom was filled with puke—in the sink, in the toilets, on the floor. It was really disgusting. And Cydon or somebody said, "Dee Dee, d'ya need anything?" I said, "Yeah, I want some speed." So all of a sudden I had a huge amount of speed in my hand. I started sniffing it like crazy. I was so high, and I saw Sid. He said "D'you have anything to get high?" I said "Yeah, I got some speed." Sid pulled out a set of works and put a whole bunch a speed in the syringe and then stuck the needle in the toilet with all the puke and piss in there and loaded it. He didn't cook it up. He just shook it, stuck it in his arm and got off. I just looked at him. I'd seen it all by then. He just looked at me kind of dazed and said, "Man, where d'you get this stuff?"

## TOMMY

In the beginning, Tommy Elderly, the first Ramones drummer, was like the frustrated leader. Tommy had no artistic input in the group, but he definitely got us off the ground. The Ramones wouldn't have done anything without Tom, because we were really green. We didn't know what the hell was going on. Tommy was really annoying, because he was a hideously ugly person, but he thought he looked like Peter Dinklage or something.

John was very nasty to Tommy and then Joey started getting nasty to Tommy. Tommy and I got along 'cause I was obviously not in competition to be the leader of that group, and Joey and John were always striving for it.

The Ramones' gigs, especially the early ones in England, were very violent, and Tommy was very tiny, so it was hard on him. One time some fan came up and pulled out a pen and asked Tommy for an autograph. Tommy said, "That's not a knife, is it? You aren't going to stab me, are you?"

Tommy left the Ramones when he cracked. All our drummers crack. Every couple years one would crack, and then the group would be really happy 'cause we'd gotten rid of someone. It's always the same thing with the Ramones. They wouldn't say,



*Dumb—Everyone's accusing me*

"We're gonna add this quality or that quality"; they would just say, "We're gonna get faster." So every drummer they got, they made him play faster and faster.

When Tommy left, Johnny asserted himself right away. It made it hell for me. He acted like Adolf Hitler, (his nickname is "The Führer"), but John did a lot for the group that Joey and I couldn't. Like, John made us money. He just knew how to do it. He always read the contracts and bickered with booking agents, record companies and the managers. No manager ever got us more money than Johnny Ramone'd.

So, John had his good points. Also, in the early days, when I was very weak and self-destructive, Johnny helped carry me through a lot of crap.

Still, I feel like I was just being used—for my music, for the band. I feel like it was just pure business—even though John would tell me with a lot of sincerity that he wanted the best for me, and I would believe him. But friendship isn't what makes John tick. It's money. And that hurts when you've got to live with four people all year round, and the thing in your fantasy of the Ramones is brothers. But it was like four angry brothers.

## MARKY

I had always known Mark. John knew him from "Dust." I knew him later from "Wayne County." Mark and I were drinking buddies. Mark was about the only person who could drink as much as me. Sometimes in the middle of some drunken night I'd say, "Mark, I think we should kick Tommy outta the Ramones and get you," and that always used to cause trouble, because Mark would come to rehearsal the next day and there'd be Tommy. There'd be a lotta tension, and I'd say "Oh, I never said that."

When we were out in LA, Mark and I became real enemies. We used to cop quaaludes together, and we'd get real bitchy. I'd start screaming that he'd beat me outta one: he'd say he gave me \$30; I'd say





WAS

COOL

IS

I'd say he only gave me \$10—That normal bullshit. Mark and I were like poison for each other

## SONGS

The first song I ever wrote was called "Home is Where Your Heart Is." I'll never do that one. I remember one of the first songs the Ramones did was "I Don't Care." Joey wrote that. We wrote some things together, too—like "What a Happy Family" and "Pinhead." We already had an album out, I think. "I Don't Wanna Walk Around With You," I wrote before the Ramones, and I had another that was the exact same song, called "I Don't Wanna Get Involved With You." Sometimes we used to do that, and they were both the same song. I don't think they had any lyrics, except "I don't wanna walk around with you," and the other one, "I don't wanna get involved with you."

Joey was always writing love songs, crying about his broken hearts that he had, which I thought was embarrassing, because I thought a rock star should never have his heart broken. I thought a rock star should break hearts and be a real lady killer and not be whining over some

**Phil Spector  
would always just  
get real violent around  
me. I seemed to bring  
out something  
bad in him.**

woman. That's all Joey did in all his songs. It was annoying the hell out of me. And so I started trying to write more serious. I think I was doing it just to flaunt it right back at them. I don't know that it was the right thing for the group now that I look back. I think rock'n'roll should be three words and a chorus, and the three words should be good enough to say it all.

## PINHEAD

The thing that was driving me crazy was playing that damn "Pinhead" song every night. My teeth are chipped because I used to have to sing the chorus of "Pinhead." We had a roadie who weighed 300 pounds: his name was Bubbles, and he would play the pinhead—get in the dress and pinhead mask. But he was so fat that when he would jump on the stage, the whole stage would shake, and the mike where I was singing would come banging into my mouth. I hated that damn song. I'm so glad I don't have to play it every night. The only good thing about it was that it came at the end of the show. So that cheered me up a little. I would think, let

me play this damn thing so I can get outta here. There was another song, "Glad to See You Go." When that used to come up I'd say, "Oh boy, three-quarters over. I can get off this stage and go to my hotel."

## PHIL SPECTOR

By the time we started working with Phil Spector, I didn't care about the band anymore. It was getting so out of hand, people were trying to get hits out of Punk Rock. Some of it was getting big, but it wouldn't work with the Ramones. And someone thought we could have a hit record if Phil Spector produced us. But it was a nightmare. First of all, we had no money. We'd been together four or five years, and we were flat broke staying in some flea-bag motel in Culver City. Just enough money to buy two damn tennies and a beer every day. Phil was totally out of his mind. I hadn't met anyone crazier than him, but he liked me a lot. He used to carry a gun all the time.

One night he pulled out his gun and wouldn't let us leave. John took care of it. He told him, "Cut it out, Phil, or we're gonna leave." He said, "Alright, you guys just try and leave. I'm not letting ya leave." We had to sit there for a couple days, and he just held us with these guns. We had to sit there in the living room and listen to him play "Baby I Love You" over and over again. I don't know what he was drinking, and I couldn't figure it out because he had this big goblet with all these jewels on it, like Dracula drinking blood. So I said, "Phil, let me have some of that." He said, "Okay, Dee Dee," and it was Man-a-shewitz Wine.

I hated him. I don't like anything about him. I don't like people who are in the music business who are bitter and trying too hard to prove something. Recording was a nightmare. It couldn't have been worse. He made John play the guitar chord—the beginning to "Rock and Roll High School"—over and over again for about six or eight hours and just sat there listening to it in a daze. John said, "Look I can't do this anymore. I'm goin' back to New York." And Phil said, "No, just give it a chance. There's something I'm tryin' to hear," and he'd sit there dazed. I don't know what the hell... It sounded the same every time John played it. I don't know what he was listening for. He would always just get real violent around me. I seemed to bring out something bad in him.

The album took forever to start because Phil wouldn't even tell us where we were recording it. Then finally he gave us a list of three studios, all within 50 miles of each other, and said, "Call this one every day at a certain hour, and that way you'll be able to know where to go." That's how paranoid he was: he

rented three studios and paid for them. Open sessions.

Phil Spector couldn't mix the album, he collapsed with a nervous breakdown after it was recorded. I just remember I was driving home with the band from the record company in New York, and they put on something from the album "I think I'm Effected" or something, and I couldn't believe how awful it sounded. It was horrible. I hated "Baby I Love you." I think that some of the worst crap I ever wrote went on that album.

## PSYCHIATRY

Any time I was at home I was seeing a psychiatrist. I spent a fortune on doctors, but it paid off. I'm better for it. I'd see the guy from Odyssey House in the beginning, then the guy from Gracie Square, then the guy from Holmwood. All the time I told them everything about the Ramones, but nobody thought I could stand on my own. Everybody thought I'd just die if I left. They said, "Dee Dee won't make it." Mainly, I was seeing them so I could get off drugs, but they told me to smoke pot. They said you absolutely can't stop smoking pot, and



Bob Gruen

these were the guys that were heads of rehabs.

For a long time, everyone was afraid to give me money 'cause I'd spend it on drugs—so they had a good reason—but then eventually I got off drugs, and I didn't drink anymore, and for the first year or so I was shakey. I had no business having money: I could have cracked. But suddenly I got real comfortable with my sobriety, and I wasn't like that anymore. I wanted to grow up. I started feeling like a human being, and I wanted to start driving again. My wife said one time, "Alright, Dee Dee, take the car" and I would always fuck up, so they had their reasons, because by the time I came home, there was no door on the side of the car. Just pulling out real fast from the spot in front of my house I saw a car so I stepped on the brake. But it was the gas, and I smashed into my neighbors' van. That car was a wreck. I got home and Vera said, "How'd ya do?" I said, "Okay." She said she wanted to go look at the car. I said, "Go look in the morning. It's late."

Continued on page 141

# Win A Pair of COORS Light Vans Shoes



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Sledgehammer—Peter Dinklage	May 7th, 1988
When Doves Cry—Prince	August 3rd, 1985
With Or Without You—U2	July 26th, 1986
Wishing Well—Terence Trent D'Arby	May 16th, 1987
Shout—Tears for Fears	July 7th, 1984

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# REPENTANT PROFESSOR

Professor Griff, the so-called anti-Semitic ogre who rocked Public Enemy, is releasing a solo album, *Pawns In The Game*.

**R**eviled by mainstream journalists and temporarily isolated from Public Enemy, Professor Griff became a pariah after he made anti-Semitic remarks in an interview published in the *Washington Times* last May. His star rose in the black community, on defiance alone, but the experience crushed him. Still an active participant in Public Enemy's live shows, but no longer Minister Of Information, Griff was particularly hurt by what he sees as PE producer Hank Shocklee and leader Chuck D's "betrayal." He felt he had been thrown to the wolves to appease the media.

Now embarking on a solo career with Miami's Skyywalker Records, Griff's debut album, *Pawns In The Game* provides evidence that Griff has undergone something of a re-education since the *Washington Times* incident. Griff now acknowledges that Jewish history is one of profound suffering.

Richard Griffin was raised in Roosevelt, Long Island, the son of a black West Virginia woman and a Blackfoot Indian. Compact, handsome, with a gravely, magnetic voice, Griff taught Islamic philosophy and martial arts to a group of young black men who would later grow into Public Enemy's security force, Security Of The First World.

In attempting to educate himself through a non-Eurocentric revision of black history, he obscured worthwhile material by citing such discredited sources as the notorious bigot Henry Ford. The claims he made in interviews were not wholly inaccurate: some Jewish merchants *did* own and trade slaves, the Israeli diamond-cutting industry

does cut South African gems. But Griff turned isolated incidents into evidence of a gross Jewish conspiracy—a deluded fantasy that has been a staple of the loony right for decades.

With his first solo album, made with a five-piece team called the Last Asiatic Disciples, Griff is now free to indulge his talents as a writer, producer and arranger unconstrained by his role in Public Enemy. His anti-drug song "Susie Wants To Be A Rock Star" is rock'n'roll. Griff says he wanted to sing like Steve Perry. He's also developing a production team that will work not only in hip hop but also with house and R&B acts. In fact, his secret love is Quiet Storm when he met Regina Belle on a PE double bill, he was tongue-tied. He wants to sing his own R&B love ballads—"there are opposites in everyone," he says. "There's hard radical poetry, and there's a soft side. I want to express another part of me."

**Have you matured since the *Washington Times* interview?**

Yes, I've learned to be a lot more sympathetic. I've learned to be more understanding of the Jewish people's pain and suffering. Not only in terms of the Holocaust, but in terms of Jewish people's whole history. I don't mock human suffering, whether it's the atom bomb dropping or the trading of Africans as slaves. I saw some film clips of the Holocaust and read some books about Jewish history—these were things I never knew. I saw the books—and you're gonna laugh at this—at the historical research

Interview by Jill Pearlman

Photography by Russel Winter

department of the Nation of Islam. The Jews came up from basically nothing. Even in the Western hemisphere, they were peddlers on the street. They were treated as the nothings of the earth. Being black in this country, I've got to respect that.

**What mistakes do you feel you made in the interview?**

I said that the Jews are responsible for the majority of the wickedness in the world, which is untrue. There are certain Jews and certain isolated incidents but definitely not the majority of the wickedness in the world. This is a big earth.

**You've been criticized for being anti-Jewish, but often you're equally harsh about your own people.**

Even though black people are called nigger, coon, hambone, shine, I take all that in stride. 'Cause I deal with black people every single day, and I know that

we're the number one murderers of each other. We're the number one drug dealers and the number one thieves. The number one liars. We've been brought down to this. And it takes a re-education program to get black people even to the level where we're human again. See, what Public Enemy set out to do was for black men and women to get a knowledge of themselves, just like every Jewish person knows who they are and what their heritage is. That's my mission. I don't mean to say this to attack one particular people, because I feel that's wrong and I wouldn't make a mockery of Jewish people or any other race of people. But I think that black people are real blind, deaf and dumb to the knowledge of themselves and other people. It makes me real sad inside to know that black people are the mother and the father of civilization and here we are in America—we been here for more than 400 years—and we own nothing. We don't even own our own minds. We have no knowledge of ourselves—at all.

**What is Public Enemy's standing in the black community since the *Washington Times* incident?**

People in the black community saw what happened and said, "I knew them niggers were gonna do that." Some niggers are scared of revolution. A lot of people wanted to know why, even if I did make a mistake, the brothers in Public Enemy didn't stand beside me. A lot of people thought Chuck became a sell-out and everyone else in the group became questionable. You know what they told me in a meeting? "Griff," they said. "What we're trying to

**"I've learned to be more understanding of the Jewish people's pain and suffering. I don't mock human suffering, whether it's the atom bomb dropping or the trading of Africans as slaves."**

tell you is that it's about money." So I asked them why are you lying to black people? What was all this black power shit they niffin' if it was just about money? On all those tours and all those records, they don't really mean none of that. They're full of shit, they really are, especially Hank Shocklee.

They took my money, they suspended me, they tried to get rid of me, they talked about me, they had people threaten me. But none of it worked because I'm not made of that bullshit. The green paper is their god and Allah is my god. I'm not saying that because I want you to pin medals on me. I'm coming from the heart. I'm not made of what these niggers are made of.

Chuck D is a good person at heart, but he's easily influenced. When a little pressure came down, they turned their back on me. That's real sad. If Allah didn't put mercy in my heart, them negroes would be dead now. I had black people come up to me and say "Hank Shocklee, he's a snake. I'll do him for free

Chuck D, he's sold out. Just tell me where he lives." But I said no. Allah has to deal with Chuck and Hank in his own way.

**Were you personally hurt by what happened?**

Very. I taught them all about martial arts and Islam. We've been together since a very young age. It's like trying to depart from your son or brother. It's real

**"People say that I never had anything to do with Public Enemy's music, and the album will prove that's not true."**

rough. For me to risk my life trying to uplift black people, thinking that the brothers are with me, and they weren't with me at all. Hank Shocklee doesn't talk to me, Bill Stephney (former Def Jam VP and a close friend of the group) doesn't talk to me, Russell Simmons (co-founder of PE's record company Def Jam) says "hi" and "bye." We do shows together but that's about it. I wouldn't say things are cold, but it's definitely cool, especially with Hank Shocklee. Envy, greed and jealousy can easily hide behind a smile and a pat on the back and a "Yo! What's up?" and a black power sign. It's not a personal attack against him [Shocklee], but the truth is the truth.

**What do you hope the new album will prove?**

People say I never had anything to do with Public Enemy's music, and the album will prove that's not true. I have a song on the album called "Susie Wants To Be A Rock Star" where Susie is America and rock is crack. It's about how America says it wants to say no to drugs but does nothing to stop the flow of drugs into the black community. I have a song called "Love Thy Enemy," which is addressed to Public Enemy.

There's also a song on there called "Pass The Ammo" which some ignorant people will say is about passing bullets, but is in fact about the knowledge that black people pass from one generation to another like we do in tribes in Africa. That's black people's real ammunition. I don't have the time to make no disc records because I'm dealing with a whole range of issues like abortion and women's rights. I believe that women should have the right to choose. I've also got a song called "The Interview" which has the *Washington Times* interview in the background.

**What about the future of black/white relations in the 90s? Can black and white live together?**

If the barriers are broken, especially in religion, then we can come together. If people are gonna get rid of the false labels, then it might happen. I would like to see that happen but it has to be done in a skillful way. If I came out and said the white man is our brother, or whatever, black people would be like, "Get out of here, you're corny." It has to be done in a language that both black and white people understand.



*Public Enemy's *Security Of The First World (SIW)* on parade—embodying the order and discipline which PE believe the black race needs if it is to prosper.*





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# LIVING POETS SOCIETY

## Screamin' Jay Hawkins

### A few records that influenced me the most

"Ol' Man River," "Summertime" and "My Mother's Eyes" by Paul Robeson, whom I liked because he was a rebel who fought the system in the US during the 20s and the 30s, went to Russia and made motion pictures there because he didn't get too much work here and refused to be an Uncle Tom like Stepin' Fetchit, Eddie Rochester Anderson, Lena Horne, Ethel Waters or Buckwheat; "Caldonia" by Louie Jordan; "Shake A Hand" by Faye Adams, "After Hours" by Erskine Hawkins, "Long Gone" by Sonny Thompson; anything by Tiny Bradshaw, Amette Cobb, Amos Milburn, Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt, Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, Shirley and Lee, Nat King Cole, Charles Brown, the Ink Spots, the Mills Brothers, Tiny Grimes and Fats Domino, even though he is conceded, self-centered and an asshole on top of that

### Why I'm called screamin'

I didn't think I could sing like Nat King Cole, so I decided to scream. Nobody else was doing it. James Brown is the world's greatest howler, but he can't scream. I can scream in tune, in any key

### Three things that make me scream

Being black, prejudice and marrying a girl who said she was pregnant after I'd just spent two years in Alaska and was too foolish to know better.

### What I'd wear to have my portrait painted

A black suit with yellow polka dots and green stripes over that, with a purple scarf around my neck, white ruffles on my sleeves, pants with white pleats on each side above white shoes, a snake around my neck and a bone in my nose

### The true king of rock'n'roll

Diana Washington, as nasty as she was

### Something I wanted to do but never did

Sing opera. Again, that goes back to Paul Robeson, but when I got into the business, opera didn't get into the charts; they were just putting rhythm & blues out.

### The definition of the blues

Being hungry, being evicted, your wife leaving you for another man and your children calling him 'daddy.'

### Some truths that are not true

White people don't have the blues—Bill Haley had the blues, so did Carl Perkins and Elvis Presley, The



Screamin' Jay has been the most flamboyant rock'n'roll entertainer since the 50s. He'll still put a spell on you.

white man is superior and the black man stinks—I've never seen a black armpit in a deodorant commercial on TV, only a white armpit; The Statue of Liberty is in New York—it's within the waters of the New Jersey shoreline; Sam Cooke was killed by a motel clerk who thought he was going to rob her—Sam Cooke was killed by the Mafia. All he did was chase a woman, while still in his shorts, because she stole his wallet and when he ran into the office after her, this black woman shot him. It was a set-up. Sam Cooke fought the establishment; he was making too much money and when a black man gets that big, there's got to be a white man behind him and Sam didn't want a white manager.

### Three white people who've spurred

#### Screamin' Jay Hawkins on

Alan Freed, who put the coffin in my act; Louis Dufon, who gave me my own license to run my booking agency here in California, which is called Hawkshaw Talent Company; Jim Jarmusch, who came out with "Stranger Than Paradise" and used "I Put A Spell On You" in it and now I'm in his movie, "Mystery Train."

### The truest words ever said

"People change, but never according to plan," "Look

for the worst, hope for the best and accept whatever happens;" "It takes ass to get ass." I went through two wars and I'm still here. I got more marks on my body than the average crossword puzzle, from knives, bombs, bullets and from being cut in half by a Japanese colonel in a prisoner of war camp

### Magazines I subscribe to

Consumer's Guide, Popular Mechanics and some computer magazines.

### The first expensive thing I bought

A hearse with zebra wall tires, instead of white wall tires, to carry the coffin that Alan Freed put in my act

### My family history

There were seven of us with one mother and different daddies. My sister once told me that as long as my mother didn't mess with no black people, she had it made. She had babies by a Chinese man and a baby by a white man. My father was from Arabia. My mother traveled, just like Paul Robeson. She had a lot of money that was inherited. There's a bunch of Hawkinses in Washington, DC, who are filthy rich, I have no idea how they made their money. I understand when my mother was pregnant with me in Washington, they stoned, beat and kicked her and forced her to get on a bus and go to Cleveland. That bus arrived in Cleveland just in time for her to have me and drop me at the nearest welfare center. Then she talked a tribe of Blackfoot Indians who were very wealthy into taking me out of that welfare home when I was 18 months old and raising me. I learned all about roots from living in the forest without no blanket and no food. I learned how to eat certain bark, plants and flowers, how to get certain stones out of ponds and rivers and make rock soup and how to cure pains and cuts with certain plants—strictly old home remedies. If my Blackfoot Indian mother was from Africa, you would call her a witch doctor; if she was from New Orleans, you'd call her a voodoo priestess. I just put it to music.

### If I were a woman

I'd want to be combination of Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday

### The nearest faraway place

San Fernando Valley, where I bought a home in a section where people are quiet, mind their own business and there are no drug addicts. Unfortunately, I'm always being bothered by door-to-door salesmen.

Interview by Scott Cohen



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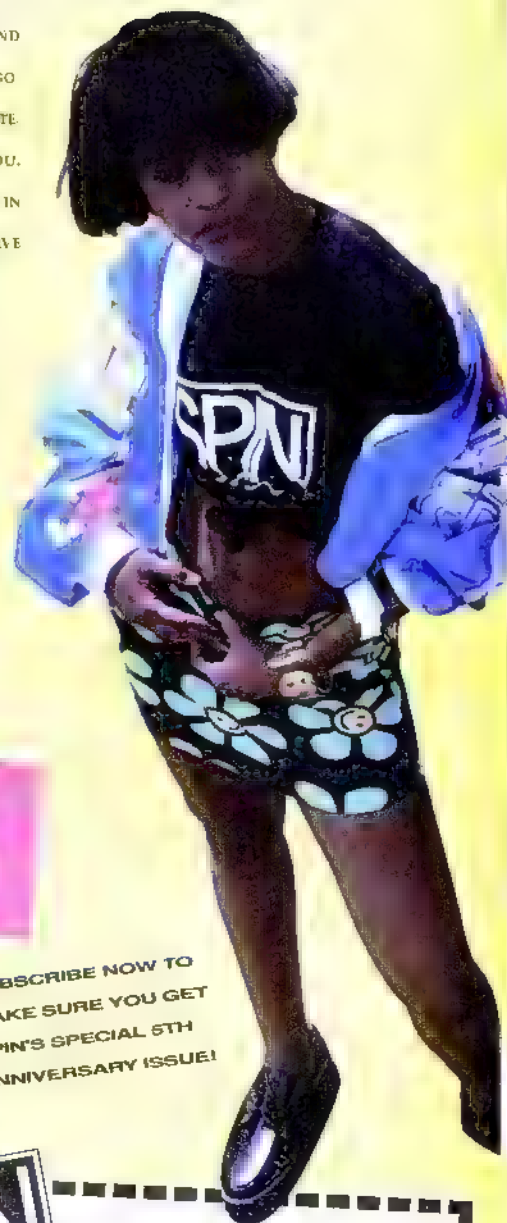
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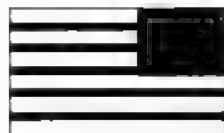
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# ANTIHERO

Opinion

## The war on drugs engenders a drug peace movement.

Column by Jefferson Morley

*Last year, I smoked crack and wrote an article about it in The New Republic, a sober political magazine not prone to Hunter Thompson-like excursions into getting high for fun and insight. But my purpose was journalistic: to see for myself what the appeal of the legendary drug is and to convey some sense of the crack experience to readers who didn't care to sample the stuff themselves.*

*I spent a few days hanging around a crack house getting to know the Olivio, Sharon, Cutto and Johnny who lived there and, of course, smoking crack with them. I came to the conclusion that if all you have in life are bad choices, crack may not be least pleasant of them.*

**D**rug Czar William Bennett, the pompous social studies teacher who somehow got appointed to be assistant principal for national morality, was indignant. He went on TV to say that my article was "garbage" and that I was among the lowest of the low: "a defector in the drug war."

I know a compliment when I hear one, but I also knew there were (and are) plenty of people who deserve Bennett's accolade more than I. Millions of Americans have bowed out of this thing we call the war on drugs. In the 90s, we're called the legalizers or the drug peace movement, and our numbers are growing. Cops, conservatives, freaks, free spirits, computer technicians, drug treatment counselors, priests and doctors. Even Dear Abby is coming around. We aren't the majority yet, not by a long shot. But we are a majority in the making.

We are not a movement of drug users. It is true that many legalizers enjoy consuming recreational drugs, but in this respect they are no different from the people who favor drug prohibition. Some legalizers are addicted to nicotine, for example—but so is Drug Czar Bennett. Some legalizers like Miller Light, others prefer marijuana. Still others favor the kind of stimulation that only a white powder—cocaine or caffeine—can provide.

Most legalizers acknowledge that consuming mind-altering substances is a human impulse that

predates the Drug Czar by millennia. I personally suspect that legalization of marijuana would make for a slightly more peaceable society, but there are others who think it would just create a nation of people who can't remember where they put the car keys. What unites all of us in the drug peace movement is the conviction that individuals, not policemen and bureaucrats, should make the decision to use or not to use drugs.

**T**he drug peace movement doesn't favor surrendering to the problems associated with drugs in our society. It favors pacifying the drug market so that violence, addiction, crack babies and the like can be addressed more effectively. "It seems to me we're not really going to get anywhere until we can take the criminality out of the drug business and the incentives for criminality out of it," says one of the more unexpected defectors in the drug war, former Secretary of State George Shultz. Shultz favors what he calls "controlled legalization."

I like Shultz's term because the drug legalization movement is really a drug regulation movement. Legalizers want to regulate—not eliminate—the sale and use of drugs. One legalization proposal, developed by Kevin Zeese of the Drug Policy Foundation, a drug reform organization in Washington, DC, calls for a Harmfulness Tax. Under Zeese's plan, a committee of public health experts would classify all mind-altering substances—nicotine, alcohol, marijuana—according to the risks they pose to the user. The more hazardous substances would be taxed at a higher rate to discourage use. The tax revenues would then fund public health programs.

While a militarized approach to drug problems sounds tougher, it actually removes various social controls on drug use and commerce. The Drug War eliminates the possibility of financial regulation of drugs. It encourages violence as a means of settling disputes among drug entrepreneurs. Drug prohibition actually encourages the use of more toxic drugs: if the risks of selling crack and selling marijuana are the same, then it makes sense to deal in the more potent and profitable substance, crack. The refusal of the drug warriors to note the rather obvious differences between a joint and a syringe full of heroin also hurts law enforcement. The cops and the courts lose credibility with the society when they attempt to punish the weekend pot smoker the same way they punish the crazed crackhead.

**A**s a result, the troops in the drug war—the police—are beginning to tire of their impossible role fighting the drug war. "My people are being lied to," says Ralph Salerno about the drug war.

Salerno is a former chief of detectives in New York City. He spent 20 years pursuing organized crime figures in New York, including high-level drug importers. Now he teaches and consults. "I tell the guys in my classes, 'The assignment they (the Just Say No/zero tolerance brigade) have given you is to empty out the Atlantic ocean. And they've given you a tin cup.'"

Salerno says he has favored drug legalization since 1976. "Towards the end of my career, it kind of gelied," Salerno says. "Organized crime is not cops and robbers. It's a tremendously big business—a billion-dollar business that is completely untaxed. We can put away all the leaders of the Medellín and Cali cartels, and they'll all be replaced just like Vito Genovese was replaced in the drug business by his friends and associates."

Salerno has company among the men in blue. Former New York City police chief Patrick Murphy has come out for legalization. Many other police chiefs, while not willing to go that far, decry the Drug War approach. Isaac Fulwood, the police chief of Washington, DC, says, "Bennett's approach is absolutely 100 percent dead wrong."

Salerno claims he has a lot of support among rank and file policemen. "Ten years ago when I talked about legalization, I'd say the guys were 90 to 10 against it. Now, I'd say it's closer to 50-50."

And cops aren't the only ones. The religious community is becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the war on drugs.

**B**y day, Emmett McAuliffe is a public defender in the criminal courts of Saint Louis; by night he is a rock 'n' roll dj on a small, local FM station. But he's also a veteran of the Catholic worker's movement, a group devoted to living among and working with the poor. And now he is a spokesman for the Drug Re-legalization Project, a new organization of clergymen and others who insist that legalization is the moral approach to the current drug problem. The leader of the group is the Reverend John Sirico, a Jesuit priest from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

McAuliffe spent two years living in a shelter for the homeless on the north side of Saint Louis. "I worked





with a lot of drug addicts and felt the throes of what they were going through. I always saw such an inherent contradiction between trying to help them and the fact that, in the eyes of the law, this person was an unindicted felon. Some people are willing to live with that contradiction, but I'm not."

When McAuliffe moved from the homeless shelter to the public defender's office, his support for drug legalization only grew. "I just had an 18-year-old sentenced to 10 years for a distribution charge. He doesn't even understand what's happened to him. All he knows is selling drugs is the way you make money. It's such a waste because his prime years have just gone out the window. He's not a kingpin. His only crime is being stupider than the guys who really know how to sell drugs."

"We are people who come to the drug issue from a religious or moral background and think that legalization is morally right," McAuliffe says. "The churches are not speaking out of both sides of their

mouths on this issue, the way some people are. The churches have provided their basements for Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. They've taken in the people with crack problems. They're not in favor of drugs."

And the list goes on. The mayors of Baltimore and Minneapolis favor legalization. So does Tom Selleck, the star of the hit TV show "Magnum P.I." Kurt Loder, reporter for "MTV News," did a hard-hitting report on the legalization debate which left little doubt that he and his bosses at the music television network were in favor. Barbara Walters and Hugh Downs gave the thumbs-up to legalization on ABC's 20/20 show last year. Richard Dennis is a Chicago businessman who made a vast fortune in commodities trading. He makes a habit of giving out large contributions to groups organizing for the legalization of drugs. Robert Sweet is a federal judge in New York City. He made headlines last winter when he came out in favor of legalizing all drugs, including crack.

**T**he legalizers nonetheless have a big problem. Drug War extremism now prevails in the corridors of government and the offices of the media. Only in the past year have advocates of drug legalization been given air time to make their case. Much more typical media fare in the drug war was a blurb for a recent network TV miniseries on the murder of a DEA agent in Mexico. The 30-second teaser portrayed a group of brave men without the power of arrest, the poor Drug Enforcement Administration, fighting against the forces of evil, the corrupt drug entrepreneurs in Latin America. Without casting a doubt on the sincerity or physical courage of law enforcement officers, this is a fantasy. It made for good modern-day Westerns with the requisite villains of somewhat darker skin color. But it fosters terribly misleading ideas of the drug warriors.

For one thing, without tens of millions of willing customers in North America, these allegedly evil entrepreneurs wouldn't exist. For another, you don't



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have to go to Mexico to find drug corruption. How about Washington, DC? In the past 18 months, two former US Congressmen have been convicted of involvement in drug money laundering. Our national obsession with the pervasiveness of the drug business in Latin America blinds us to the business in our midst. There are dozens of bankers doing business in Miami and Los Angeles who are known to deal in drug money. There are thousands of pot growers harvesting the pungent weed by the truck load in places like Humboldt County, California, and Clay County, Kentucky. But the drug entrepreneurship of white Americans doesn't make for a melodramatic mini-series or a 30-second campaign commercial.

**A**fter my crack article, I had the chance to learn about the damaging effects of addiction to Drug War rhetoric. The intoxicating effects of just Say No and Zero Tolerance had impaired the judgement of otherwise thoughtful people. Bennett said that I lacked compassion for crack babies and portrayed himself, by contrast, as the stalwart defender of the interests of black people. A right-wing pundit described me as a "yuppie low-life." This wise man thought it "contemptible" that I declined to pledge allegiance to the government's current drug policies. A gasbag from *The Washington Post* said that my account of smoking crack was "a lie," and "a phony field report." While the pundit had never previously written a word about the drug problem before and had never seen the ins de of a crack house, he said that I didn't know what I was talking about. An incensed woman from Massachusetts wrote to me, "What I object to is your calling crack pleasurable."

Perhaps no line irked the drug warriors more than my rather self-evident assertion that "If all you have in life are bad choices, crack may not be the most unpleasant of them."

"That's pretty shocking," gawped one radio talkshow host in Milwaukee. I asked him what was shocking about it, and he decided to take a phone call. The first caller said to me "What are you telling us that is new? It is perfectly obvious that people use crack because it feels good." I said she was right, but how was it that something that is perfectly obvious could also be shocking? I mentioned the Emperor's New Clothes. It was perfectly obvious that the emperor was buck naked. Still everybody was shocked when the little boy said it out loud.

Salerno says he is trying to ease his way into retirement, but the good fight against the folly of the Drug War keeps taking up more and more of his time. What would he think if Bill Bennett called him a defector in the drug war? "I'd say to Mr. Bennett, very respect-

ful y, that I have more experience in law enforcement than he does, and I haven't defected from the Drug War. I'm in it up to my ears—as a member of the loyal opposition."

"Anytime Bennett tries to take the moral high ground, we will be right there with someone opposing him," says McAuliffe. "Questions of morality are being usurped by the government and we want to change that. The state should stay out of the business of morality and religion. If your kid comes home high on cocaine, you don't call a cop you call a counselor or a minister. What we're talking about is really as simple as the separation of church and state."

Like the former Communist leaders in Eastern Europe, Bennett and the drug warriors may wake up one morning astonished to realize that the support they thought was unanimous had vanished into thin air.

**While a militarized approach to drug problems sounds tougher, it actually removes various social controls on drug use and commerce.**

**S**ee the guy driving that Ford truck over there? I know him. He's a friend of mine, a computer technician who lives in suburban Washington, DC. He voted for Bush, opposes gun control and listens to rock 'n' roll. I personally think he has a racism problem. Just the kind of guy Bill Bennett can count on, right? Wrong. My friend smokes a bowl of weed every day on the way home from work. He says, "Legalize everything, except maybe crack. Put warnings on the packages. Don't let anybody advertise it. And teach kids that getting high is nice, but it ain't real life."

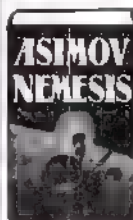
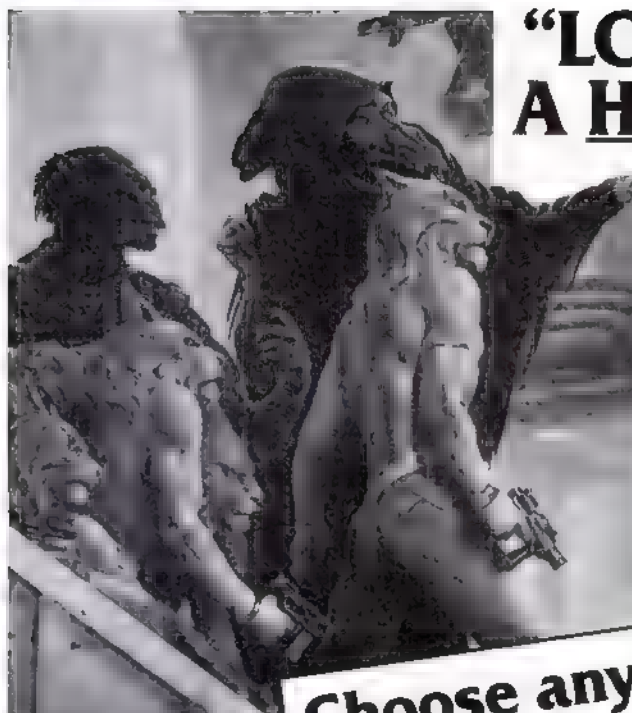
Listen to this 67-year-old grandma from Kalamazoo. "I think my 19-year-old granddaughter has experimented with marijuana, but I don't know. The fact is, every person has to decide for themselves."

Listen finally to this Jamaican man who sells \$10 bags of marijuana in Malcolm X park in downtown Washington, DC. "Arrest God. He grew the shit."

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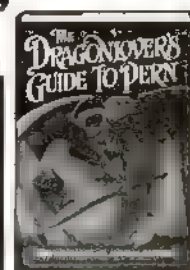
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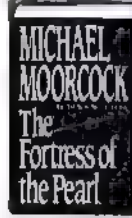
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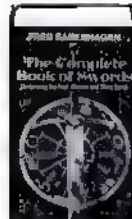
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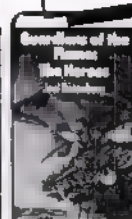
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THIS IS AMERICA

**"Night Music" is the first network TV music show without teen dancers, stand-up comics or killer bees.**

## After Midnight

Sitting smack in the middle of commercials for dry beer and phone porn, NBC's "Night Music" is the best reason to stay up late on Sunday night since "Twilight Zone" reruns. Now in its second year, the show, formally known as "Michelob Presents Night Music," began as a slightly more reserved creature, hosted by respected saxophonist David Sanborn who would introduce and then play with musical guests like Al Jarreau and Joe Cocker. After producing two episodes of the show last year, the notoriously broad-minded Hal Willner (orchestrator of surprising tribute albums like *Stay Awake* and *Lost in the Stars* and music coordinator for "Saturday Night Live"), joined Sanborn as musical producer and co-conspirator. "Night Music" has evolved into a pleasantly eclectic battle of the bands, where horror prophet Diamanda Galas can mop the studio floors with the ever-lovable Indigo Girls, and guests can collaborate on campfire standards like "Red River Valley" and "I Wanna Be Your Dog."

The show isn't your standard music jamboree: no teen dancing, no comedy sketches about killer bees, and it would be more likely to feature Ed Sullivan as a kazoo player. "Night Music" is just that, and the music you see runs a wild gamut between the tried and true (Eric Clapton,

Conway Twitty) and the truly bizarre (the Residents and Sun Ra). Best of all, each episode climaxes with a spectrum-leaping collaboration between that night's guests, a typical example being

the jam between clanky Sonic Youth and puddin'-smooth Daniel Lanois.

"Beyond putting on music that we love," says Willner, who picks the show's guests with Sanborn and producer John Head, "I feel an obligation to expose people to other things. I mean, watching MTV, they don't tell you about Ornette Coleman."

"Night Music" presents bands and musicians simply and without video enhancement. The show is taped at New York's Chelsea Television Studios, on an artless set lit only by the warm glow of video spotlights. Tonight, the cameras hungrily circle an all-ages band in pre-show rehearsal: jazz great Charlie Haden bleeps out a few dark notes on his stand-up bass, then ghost bluesman Nick Cave bays the first words to "Hey Joe" as guitarist Mick Harvey (from Cave's band the Bad Seeds) strums along in dirge time, and Belgian harmonica master Toots Thielmans trades solos with Sanborn.

The camera operators cover it laboriously, trading close-ups of Cave's grimacing face with overhead crane shots of the entire band. Between run-throughs, Cave shuffles around uncomfortably. Toots, whose credits include writing the theme for "Sesame Street," makes a face like a lizard and imitates Cave's lower-than-dirt singing. Cave doesn't even notice.

Such clashes of sensibility are

on Neville all in the same hour. Just to have all those emotions make sense together."

Since the producers are trying to squeeze seven shows out of five shooting sessions, tonight's taping doesn't begin until midnight. At 11:45 the studio audience (including Pat Metheny and Cave-heads Sonic Youth and J. Mascis from Dinosaur Jr.) files in, and production administrator Jane Fitzgerald warms them up.

House band guitarist Hiram Bullock, sitting in the front row of the audience, interrupts Fitzgerald's spiel with a fake cowboy drawl.

"Moo, moooooo! Come to Russell's Steak House," he says.

Fitzgerald looks worried.

The Night Music band begins to "warm up," which means a few extended jazz fusion numbers wherein Hiram makes funny faces and walks about 50 feet away from the band while he knocks out another "space improv" solo.

The stage manager counts down. "Five—four—three—two—one—"

The band kicks into the show's theme song, cameras roll and the first on-air shot is an overhead crane swoop-in that lands on Sanborn as he hawks the last few bars of the theme song. After three numbers by Charlie Haden's Liberation Orchestra, two by Toots and the all-ages jam on "Hey Joe," there is a ripple of



Willner's forté "I'm getting back to a musical education with this show," he says. "In a weird way, I'm searching for that by having all worlds meet. Having John Zorn, Marianne Faithfull and Aar-

furive glances among the crew. Word comes around that because of technical problems, much of the show will have to be taped again.

Sanborn wanders off-camera and sits



down wearily. "You spend a lot of time waiting around," he says. "You know, waiting while they get camera angles. It's just like the Army. It's the waiting part that drains your energy."

Sometime after 3 a.m., Cave and Harvey rumble into their second take of Cave's "The Mercy Seat." Willner sits in the audience, head in hands, Sanborn sits on the edge of the set, yawning. As the song shudders to a halt, someone yells "Ballgame!" and the on-air red camera light blinks off. "It'd be great if the show could go on, if we could really reach an audience and feel an impact," says Willner. "I don't think there's anyone else doing what we're doing. Unfortunately."

As the warm studio lights are replaced by harsh white worklights, Willner shuffles past the audience, stroking his chin, and growls half-jokingly, "Go home! Get out of here!"

—Pat Blashill

### "The Blood of Heroes"

Directed by David Peoples

Imagine if you would a dusty, post-apocalyptic world where a band of roaming warriors spend all their time strapping themselves into absurd rag-and-rubber-thong costumes, crowding into a circle and playing a pointless little game that involves team relays, beatings with heavy chains and the pursuit of an unsavory skinned animal head which is thrust onto a spike as a sign of victory. After the battle, everybody crowds around the campfire, dancing to what sounds like zydeco music, cruising each other and comparing scars.

This is the world of the Juggers, a ritualistic gang conceived by writer and first-time director David Peoples as an excuse to make a fight flick full of heroic talking heads spouting banalities. Peoples had a hand in the scripts for "Leviathan," "Ladyhawke," "Predator" and "Blade Runner," but the operative reference for "Blood of Heroes" is the "Road Warrior" trilogy (especially in its "Thunderdome" ish conclusion). A snarling Rutger Hauer takes the solipsistic Mad Max role, with Joan Chen ("The Last Emperor") as his tomboy sidekick bent on becoming a warrior goddess. Both do their damndest to pump up the lame intensity of their exchanges: "Life is hard everywhere." "I'm good. I can win." But the only real energy comes from the unintended yuks provoked by Peoples' ridiculous argot: "At least we could go 100 stones three times," "He's a good quik" and "Nobody carries the Dog-boy." Despite the clamorous score and rapid-fire fight scenes, "The Blood of Heroes" feels more like a creaky biblical epic than an action movie.

—Katherine Dieckmann



### "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover"

Directed by Peter Greenaway

Movies made by England's Peter Greenaway look like poofy PBS imports on the surface, but there are real chunks of nasty underneath—they're both rarefied and earthy, a combo that makes American audiences edgy. "A Zed and Two Noughts" features time-lapse sequences of decaying animals to illustrate its tale of human grief, while "The Draughtsman's Contract" tips a genteel Restoration sex farce into class-war and murder. For all his film's tra-la-la visuals, Greenaway's a poet of blood and bile.

This goes double for his latest. "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover" is an odd blend of the genteel, the surreal and the mind-bendingly grotty, all taking place in an upscale French restaurant that looks slightly more off-kilter than the sets in "Brazil."

The restaurant is dominated every night by a sadistic gangster (Michael Gambon), his coterie of thugs and his grateful, much-abused wife (Helen Mirren). One evening the wife spots a book-

ish diner (Alan Howard) sitting alone. They impulsively make love in the ladies' room and begin to tryst regularly under the nose of her husband and the protective wing of the Cook (Richard Bohringer). The tale that untolds owes a lot to modern minimalist style (meaning a lot of fake Phillip Glass music), but it's also rooted by Greenaway's near-medieval insistence on the realities of flesh: this is a Jacobean revenge-tragedy played out with actual sex, death, sweat and shit.

"The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover" is as unsettling as movies get, and it's going to make some people very angry. Gambon's hellacious Thief, a brute of incredible depravity, is actually scarier than Dennis Hopper in "Blue Velvet," and the violence he dishes out leaves no middle ground. You either bolt for the exits or you pray hard that he gets it.

Well, he gets it, all right, and in a caper that merrily breaks one of the few taboos this culture has left. Don't expect me to spoil it. Just remember that this movie takes place in a restaurant.

—Ty Burr

*Above: Michael Gambon—playing the Thief, Albert Spica, in Peter Greenaway's nasty "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover"—has a quick bite to eat. Greenaway's film is as unsettling as movies get. Left: Nick Cave straightens his tie on the set of NBC's "Night Music."*

## H O T

### SALES AND RENTALS

VIDEO REVIEW, the leading home entertainment magazine, compiles the "Video 20" exclusively for SPIN.

1

#### LETHAL WEAPON 2

Warner

2

#### INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE

Paramount

3

#### PARENTHOOD

MCA

4

#### TURNER & HOOD

Touchstone

5

#### WHEN HARRY MET SALLY...

Nelson

6

#### LICENSE TO KILL

CBS/Fox

7

#### KARATE KID III

RCA/Columbia

8

#### UNCLE BUCK

MCA

9

#### FRIDAY THE 13TH, PART VIII

Paramount

10

#### BATMAN

Warner

## W A R M

### DUE IN STORES THIS MONTH

1

#### HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS

Touchstone, March 16

2

#### THE ABYSS

CBS/Fox, March 15

3

#### HEART OF DIXIE

Orion, March 29

4

#### CHOCOLAT

Orion, March 29

5

#### BILLY CRYSTAL: MIDNIGHT TRAIN TO MOSCOW

HBO, now available

6

#### ELVIS STORIES

Rhino, now available

7

#### REBELLY RALLIES

Cannon, February 14

8

#### EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS II: EDDIE LIVES!

IVE, now available

9

#### HANK WILLIAMS, JR.: FULL ACCESS

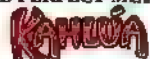
Cabin Fever, now available

10

#### NBA SUPERSTARS

CBS/Fox, now available

### THE PERFECT MIX...



& YOUR FAVORITE VIDEO

# VIDEO REWIND

**D**o demented melodrama, a creepy sociopolitical thriller and old Joan Crawford flicks all rolled up into one feverish sweatball sound good to you? Me too, and thank God for "Apartment Zero" (Academy). Colin Firth plays a young Argentinian anglophile in Buenos Aires: he runs a moldy film-revival house, has photos of Monty Clift and Charles Laughton on his wall and adores his mum—all accepted cinema shorthand for repressed homosexuality. When an American side of beef (Hart Bochner) shows up as his new roommate, Firth bugs his eyes and polishes the furniture a lot, until he finds out the mystery hunk may be a freelance mercenary working for the military death-squads. Things get good and strange from there, and the cast is in on the joke: it's like Rainer Fassbinder directing an "Odd Couple" episode in a drunken stupor, and that's a recommendation.

"Queen of Hearts" (MCEG/Virgin) is an art film, sort of: it's fake Fellini about a sprawling Italian family that emigrates to London (no subtitles to shipwreck your eyeballs) where dad starts a cafe. It's the kind of movie that has a Lusty, Life-Affirming Grandpa, but it's also the kind of movie where a talking pig teaches the father how to play cards. I don't know: this one didn't seem like much when I watched it, but it's sticking to my ribs like creamed corn.

What's creepy about "Communion" (MCEG/Virgin), based on Whitley Streiber's I've-been-chosen-by-aliens



Colin Firth (center) and Hart Bochner (right) in "Apartment Zero"

bestseller of the same title, is not the ET's themselves: they look like psychotic Smurfs. No, what's creepy is watching Christopher Walken and Lindsay Crouse, two of the leading practitioners of the Stanislawski-on-Lithium acting method, try to portray normal people Crouse I can understand—she's married to David Mamet, so their dinner conversations probably do sound like this: "Pass the fucking salt." "The salt." "That's what I said, the fucking salt." "Fuck You."—but, what's Walken's excuse? He can't say a single line of dialogue without stopping and starting, repeating syllables and generally trailing off into Rod Steiger dadaland. This is the guy the aliens want? Do they need a host for a John Carradine festival? Who cares what the movie's about: the fun here is watching Walken try to get through a scene.

"Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (Disney) is a perfectly acceptable giant-insect movie, probably the best since "Them!" and "Jules Verne's Mysterious Island" in the 50s. Yeah, you're too cool to have

seen it in the theaters, but go ahead and rent it, pretend you're nine and just getting cynical. I guarantee you'll say "Aw, neat" at least once. The entire story's contained within the title (probably one reason it grossed \$130 million), but it's the least pushy of last year's blockbusters (probably the other reason) and you can't hate a movie that gets you snuffly over the death of an ant.

For a semi-avant-garde B&W 16 mm nightcap, try Matthew Harrison's "Two Boneheads," a funny 27-minute ode to fucking up as a form of male bonding. Desmond (Christopher Grimm) is the kind of guy who shows up for work at noon with a six-pack. His pal Seth (Evan Brenner) comes through town on his way to patching things up with his fiancée; he looks like a yuppie, but that's just his way of impressing her parents. The movie's about how these two can't get anything but drunk: it's the kind of smartass film-boy riff that falls flat unless you get the inflections right, and "Two Boneheads" gets them right. Bonus points for Danny Miller's music (reference point: Royal Crescent Mob) and the woman playing Bonnie Sushi, who cures Brenner's hangover by beating up on his foot. (Available from Matthew Harrison Films, 160 E. 3rd St., NYC, NY 10009.)

"The Trouble With Dick" (Academy) is a lame sleeping pill that purports to concern a geeky sci-fi writer with writer's block and the women who unaccountably crawl all over him. The cassette packaging and first half-hour make it look like another SoCal sex-comedy, but the writer/director has "deeper things" in mind if you're lucky you'll pass out before this film turns into a pastel mall production of "Repulsion." This turk, won Grand Prize at the US Film Festival, which means the competition must have been worse. Scary thought.

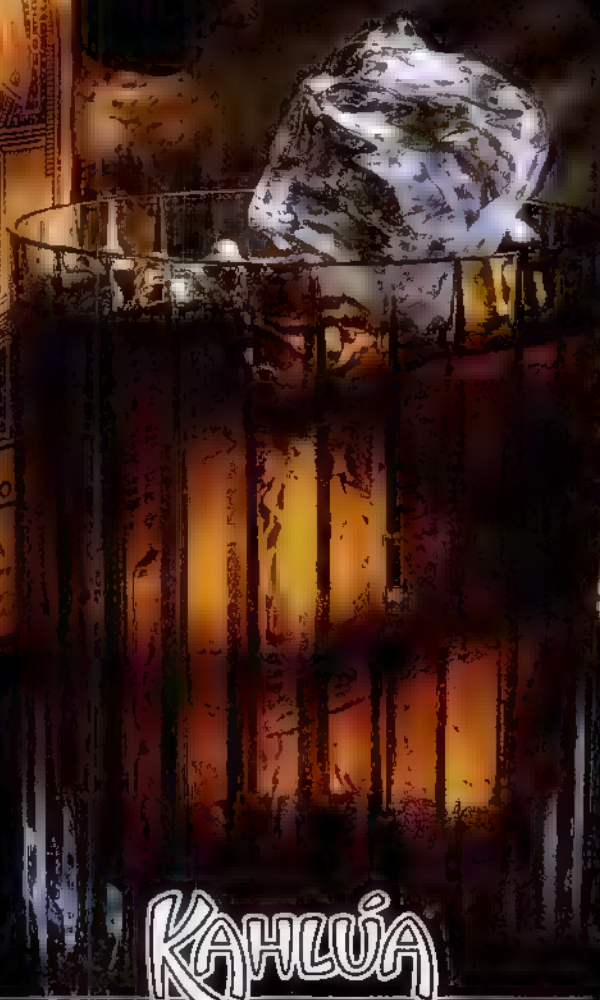


"Honey, I Shrunk the Kids"—the best giant insect movie since "Them!"

—Ty Burr



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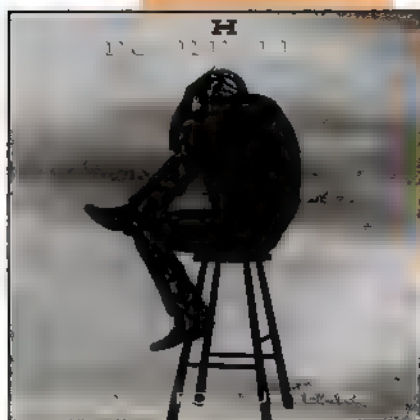
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TIME AND SPACE  
EVERY LITTLE WORD

5



# AIDS

## WORDS FROM THE FRONT

The HIV debate flares up again after a new study shows that HIV does not cause one of the major AIDS diseases. Is Peter Duesberg right when he says we've got the wrong culprit in HIV?

Column by Celia Farber

**O**ver three years ago, Berkeley biologist Peter Duesberg stunned and infuriated the scientific community by insisting that the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) does not cause AIDS. He was so certain, he said, he would volunteer to be injected with it.

Duesberg's critique of the HIV-AIDS theory began with the observation that HIV is a latent, inactive, and barely present virus. This virus, he said, which infects only an insignificant amount of immune cells, could not possibly explain the total immune devastation seen in AIDS, and that something else, possibly the widespread use of recreational drugs, must be the real culprit.

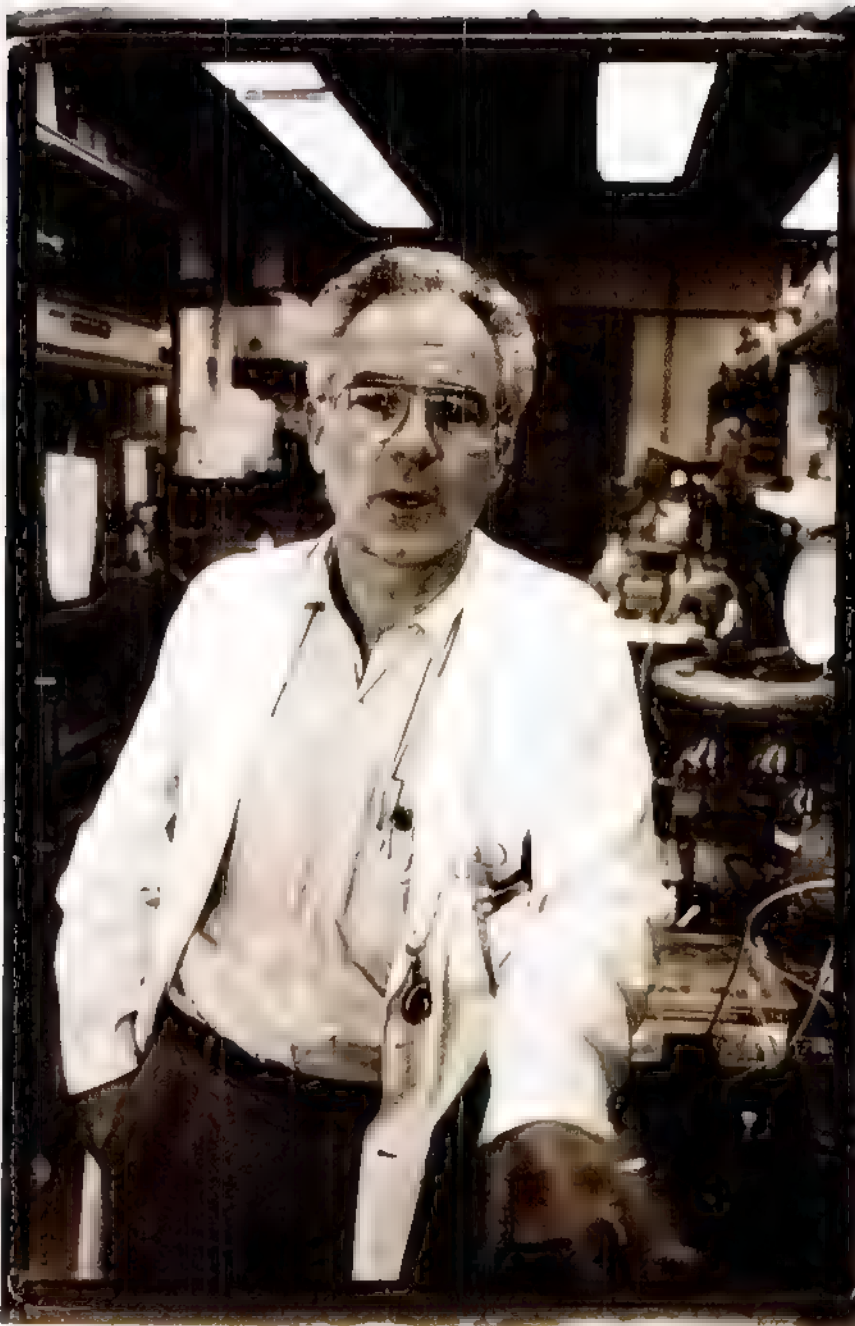
Over the years, his has not been the only voice of dissent in the HIV debate, but it has been the loudest, most persistent and most credible one. Duesberg, who has studied retroviruses for 25 years and enjoys membership in the National Academy of Sciences, is a thorn in the side of the establishment for the simple reason that he, as one of his colleagues said, "probably knows more about retroviruses than any man alive."

In the last two years, with intensity and attention that ebbs and flows, the scientific community, media and AIDS community have been embroiled in an often confused and visceral catfight over Duesberg. As one of the most controversial figures in AIDS, he is both admired and scorned, depending on whether you're willing to entertain the possibility that he is right.

Duesberg's critique of HIV is massive, and in parts complex, and although several scientists have taken a stab at debunking him, he says none has succeeded.

Meanwhile, the "implications" of his critique have been frowned upon, by journalists and health care workers alike, who insist that Duesberg is "irresponsible" for "confusing the public" and discouraging AIDS patients from taking the anti-HIV drug AZT.

At the peak of his frustration over Duesberg, Dr. Robert Gallo, a leading AIDS researcher who claims to be the "co-discoverer" of HIV, but who in an ironic twist of events has seen his reputation tarnished lately, blurted out that Duesberg's theory, and his em-



phasis on alternate causes, was "...cock and horse-shit..." and assured the public that HIV "killed like a truck." (SPIN, Feb. 1988). Dr. Mathilde Krim sighed and told SPIN: "It's true, we cannot prove that HIV causes AIDS, and Dr. Duesberg cannot prove that it doesn't. That's science." To this Duesberg responded, "You can never prove a negative, but you can prove a positive. And those that claim the credit for the discovery of HIV as the cause of AIDS—those who sell test kits, who treat AIDS with AZT, which is in itself very dangerous—carry the burden of proof. Not those who ask, 'where is the evidence?'"

Eventually, things started to change, slowly at first, and then in big sweeps. Today, researchers are

quoted regularly saying that "co-factors seem to be necessary in the development of AIDS." Gallo himself came up with a new herpes virus that he said worked in conjunction with HIV and which explained the loss of T-cells, clearly not brought on by HIV.

In January of this year, the *New York Times* reported on its front page that one of the three major AIDS diseases, Kaposi's Sarcoma, is not caused by HIV, but by an "as yet unidentified infectious agent." Researchers had arrived at this by studying men with the cancer who had no trace of HIV. People with KS were now told that they "may not have AIDS at all." Researchers were quoted as saying that they "always

wondered about this," and needed to keep "an open mind," apparently forgetting that Gallo and other scientists wrote elaborate research papers demonstrating how HIV causes Kaposi, even though it has never been found in the cancer.

AIDS started with Kaposi's Sarcoma, appearing primarily in gay men, and eventually afflicting nearly half of all gay men with AIDS. Today the figure is 21 percent of AIDS classified cases in gay men. How many people have been put on AZT for a disease which now, 10 years later, is said not to be AIDS but a whole new "sexually transmitted disease?"

At the same time as this revelation unfolded, interest in Dr. Shyh-Ching Lo and his mysterious "mycoplasma" has surged, with extensive coverage in the nation's press (SPIN Jan. 1990). Lo has discovered an agent that causes AIDS-like symptoms and death in animal models, something HIV has never done. On January 22, he finally unveiled his findings at a meeting held at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). Lo has reported deaths in patients who were infected with his mycoplasma, but not with HIV. The mycoplasma was found in the thymus, liver, spleen, lymph nodes and brain in 22 of 34 people who had died of AIDS. Lo also reported that certain antibiotics like tetracycline and doxycycline are effective against the agent in the test tube.

As the *New York Times* pointed out, Lo's discovery was dismissed three years ago as a "finding of no significance." Now scientists are climbing over each other to get closer to Lo's find. All of a sudden, the HIV theory isn't so solid. Here is a new agent, not a virus, that is also capable of causing what appears to be "AIDS." The tragic question is how many lives could have been saved had the AIDS establishment been open to other theories and alternative research from the beginning?

Another blow that shook the HIV establishment was the 70,000-word expose on Dr. Gallo, "co-discoverer" of HIV, published late last year in the *Chicago Tribune*. The piece, which detailed, among other things, how Gallo may have stolen credit for the discovery of HIV from Dr. Luc Montagnier in Paris, triggered a long overdue scepticism in the people who are running AIDS research.

The article, which apparently took two years to complete, struck so hard that Congress has launched a full-scale investigation into the allegations of scientific fraud and misconduct of Gallo and his lab workers. "Issues were raised in the article that, if proven true, are professionally unacceptable at best, and illegal at worst," said a spokesman for Congressman John Dingell's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. The committee demanded an investigation within the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the spokesman described their response as "evasive, to say the least." In a letter from John Dingell to Dr. William Raub, Acting Director of the NIH, Dingell writes: "Previous investigations by the Subcommittee staff have indicated that in the past, NIH has turned a blind eye to misconduct by senior scientists supported by Federal funds." Raub's response is vague. He says that Crewdson's *Tribune* article presents "no new information," and is in many places, "... inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise seriously misleading." Raub does not elaborate.

It is ironic, against this backdrop, that Duesberg has been singled out as the black sheep of AIDS research. We caught up with him in his UC Berkeley lab, where he worked intently through the weekend, clad in white and peering through plastic safety glasses at strips of rubbery DNA gels, glowing pink on an ultraviolet lit table. His manner is bubbly for a sci-

## **"A scientist has to be prepared to question everything, all the time."**

entist, and he speaks with a distinct German accent. The phone rings regularly, and Duesberg darts back and forth between the phone and cutting blocks of DNA from his slab of gel. Finally, he settles down, and we have this talk:

**SPIN:** Since our first interview two and a half years ago [SPIN, January, 1988], you've taken a lot of heat. Are you still as convinced as you were then that HIV is not the cause of AIDS?

Yes, more than ever.

**Now that it has been reported that one of the most common AIDS diseases, Kaposi's sarcoma, is not caused by HIV, do you think this is a breaking point in the HIV debate?**

No, I'm sure they will recover and say there are two types of Kaposi's sarcoma or that it's a cofactor, or something

It's unbelievable what information you can feed 250 million Americans, provided it comes from the "right" sources. Even the science writers don't criticize, don't ask questions: they just follow every little move the AIDS establishment makes. What's worse is that the HIV establishment—which couldn't get enough of saying how "off the wall" I was, how "pernicious," "dangerous," "irresponsible," "attention-seeking," "leather-jacketed," "homophobic," "homosexual," all of these words, for, among other points, questioning how one of the major AIDS diseases, Kaposi's, is caused by HIV—these same people are now saying that for years they have "wondered about this." Now, Harold Jaffe [a leading AIDS researcher at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)] is saying, "a new infectious agent must be around the corner that came up at the same time as AIDS. We have always wondered about this." And Jay Levy [University of California at San Francisco School of Medicine] says, "It's very interesting, it certainly reopens the issue."

Meanwhile, Drs. Salahudin and Gallo, who published back-to-back science papers only a little over a year ago, with color pictures of how HIV causes Kaposi—although the virus has never been found in Kaposi—they said it produces a cofactor in some cells which would stimulate other cells to grow into tumors. They said the virus wouldn't have to be there; it could do it from a distance.

**So they said that the immune deficiency caused by HIV paved the way for this process to take place?**

Well, that is the major implication, which I have challenged all along. That is one of the biggest misconceptions in that field to begin with. Cancer is not caused by immune deficiency. That theory essentially died with a little animal called the nude mouse. The nude mouse doesn't have an immune system, so if that theory were correct, the nude mouse would get cancer all the time. But it doesn't have any more can-

cer than the rest. That's why immuno-therapy against cancer has never worked

Immunotherapy against cancer was a favored hypothesis by big minds—like George Klein, who in his keynote speech at the AIDS conference in Stockholm called me a "charlatan." He wrote that in the *Journal of AIDS Research* as well, but I wrote a letter asking him to retract it and he did. I wrote that I would like to see it retracted unless they could prove that I am a charlatan. I am trying to claim damages for this, you see. The queen of Sweden was there at the conference, and she hasn't talked to me since. She never talked to me before either, but who knows? Maybe she would have.

But back to the other issue: with Kaposi's sarcoma gone, we should have a new definition of AIDS again, shouldn't we? All this time, the HIV-AIDS hypothesis proponents have only asked how HIV causes KS. Now suddenly they're quoted for wondering whether the cancer is caused by HIV. I raised this question persistently. How can they be justifying AZT treatment, which was solely based on the virus hypothesis, if they don't know what the cause is? How can that be justified, if all of these people in one stroke changed their minds after one paper?

I cited in my *Proceedings* [of the National Academy of Sciences] paper that studies have been published for over a year saying that only a third of all Kaposi's cases were infected by HIV. I have pointed out repeatedly that what is true for Kaposi's is true for all other AIDS diseases. With antibodies present, the diseases are called AIDS, with antibodies absent, they're called by their old name. So with antibodies present in Kaposi's, it's called AIDS, when they're absent, it's called Kaposi

As the definition of AIDS has broadened, they have included more and more diseases, and now they're throwing them out again. So they are moving the goal posts all the time

**You said that Dr. Luc Montagnier [discoverer of HIV] has said that you are essentially right. Tell me about that.**

That's right. I'm currently in a debate with him in the *Journal of Research in Immunology*. They've asked me to debate the cause of AIDS with him in what they call a mutual interview. He hasn't responded yet, but I heard from two sources, one from the NIH, that Montagnier told John Crewdson [author of *Chicago Tribune* expose on Gallo, see SPIN February, 1990] that he agrees with me—that the virus is not sufficient to cause AIDS.

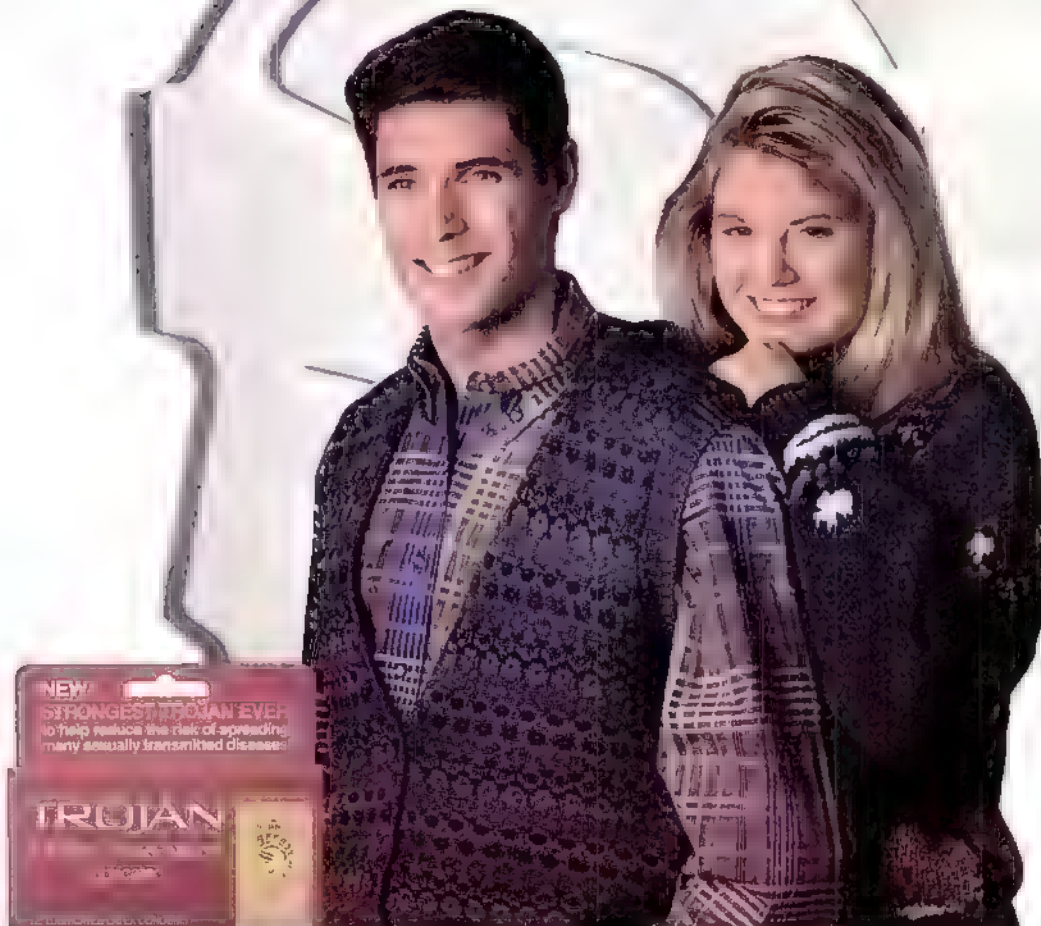
[Editor's noted: When asked to comment, Dr. Montagnier replied, "My position is that HIV causes AIDS, but cofactors are probably involved."]

... People always say, "How can you question these people? They're such good workers—how could they be wrong?" But now they can see, with Crewdson's article, what goes on with AIDS science, and I think people are beginning to consider that there may be something wrong with the science, too. Like the *New York Times*: now they're trumpeting Dr. Lo and talking about "a new microplasma." And Anthony Fauci is quoted saying that he has "an open mind"—something he's never had. He's growing a new organ—an "open mind." (Laughs)

**Aside from pneumonia and dementia, KS has been one of the major AIDS-associated diseases.**

Right. Those are the big three. Kaposi was initially





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the hallmark of the disease, and still is the characteristic one. And I want to stress that dementia cannot be explained by a deficient immune system either. And the same is true for the lymphomas—they are never seen as a result of immune deficiency.

**I've heard over and over that AZT is effective against dementia.**

I don't know how it could be. Dementia, lymphoma, and Kaposi cannot be reconciled with the immune deficiency hypothesis. Neither can they be reconciled with direct HIV infection, because even according to Gallo and Salahudin's papers, HIV was never found in Kaposi. And that's why they came up with that indirect hypothesis that some cells infected by it would produce a factor or secrete a factor, which would trigger other cells to grow into KS cells.

**Assuming that you believed that HIV causes AIDS, would you still make an argument against AZT therapy?**

Yes. Because it could only affect HIV when HIV is active. And by the time AIDS is diagnosed and treated, HIV has already been dormant for up to 10 years. By that time, you cannot affect the DNA synthesis process of HIV any longer. The toxicity of the treatment is so enormous that it's entirely irresponsible.

Last year, a study was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that claimed to put to rest one of your main arguments—that HIV is barely present in the cells. The study, using more sensitive detection techniques, said that HIV is present at levels 250 times higher than was previously thought. It was said that this study should "dispel any lingering doubts about whether HIV is the true culprit of AIDS." I know innumerable publications touted this discovery as the end of the HIV debate—the end of you, in effect. But then your nemesis, Dr. Gallo, of all people, came out and said the study didn't mean anything [SPIN, February, 1990]. I know you agree. Can you explain what, in your opinion, is wrong with the study?

I can't say what's wrong with the study, but I can tell you why the study does not resolve lingering doubts about HIV. The study reported that in some cases of AIDS, there is a very high virus titer count, and previously no study existed to show that. Before, they couldn't find much actual virus, only antibodies to it. Now this study found a high level of virus in the blood of some AIDS patients, but not in others. Now, if the high virus titer were, indeed, necessary for AIDS, it should be found in all AIDS patients, not just in some. This fact alone kills the argument that the study proves that viremia [active infection] is causative.

In addition, viremia is actually the consequence of an immune deficiency acquired for some reason or another. And AIDS stands for "acquired," possibly by some kind of intoxication or some kind of infection. Once you have acquired immune deficiency, all latent microbes usually come up, proliferate. Take, for example, irradiation, which is the most direct way of inducing an immune deficiency. For example, you go to Chernobyl and you get irradiated. Well, four weeks later you are dead, because you have no immune system: everything is growing in you—bacteria, fungi, viruses, etc—you are full of them. Even if no new



ones are introduced, the resident latent viruses, microbes and fungi in the human body take over without an immune system within a couple of hours. The best example is, if you stop living, if you're dead, you don't make any more new T-cells and B-cells, you start smelling a day or two later. Now those microbes have free play. The immune system is dead, and they take over.

When you are immune deficient, you initiate the process of dying. Essentially, you stop fighting the microbes which share the planet with us. They have their space, and we have our space. We coexist with them, because we can keep them down. But if you have an immune deficiency, they come up. If you are an AIDS patient, not only HIV, but many microbes come up. You get hepatitis, you get cytomegalovirus infection, you get syphilis, herpes, you get pneumocystis—all of these microbes which are rather endemic in the population—they become pathogenic [disease-causing], because the immune system doesn't keep them in check anymore. And—surprise, surprise—the HIV virus, as I have pointed out, never comes up. Why doesn't HIV profit from the immune deficiency that it has induced after so much hard work—after 10 years of knocking out T-cells?

Epidemiologically, one of the strongest points to make for HIV being the cause is that certain cases are said to correlate exactly: HIV infection equals AIDS. For instance, hospital care workers that have been accidentally infected...

The actual numbers are much lower than most people think. There has been a total of 2,000 confirmed needle-stick cases in health-care workers, but only 20 sero-conversions [to HIV-positive] and not

**"If I had played my cards politically correct, I would have been up there with the Nobel laureates."**

one confirmed case of AIDS. I have the reference to the study in my Proceedings paper.

The correlation between HIV and AIDS is manufactured. It is 100 percent by their definition, not by natural coincidence. The CDC definition says that any of the 25 "AIDS diseases" in the presence of antibodies is AIDS—caused by HIV. But, as I said, any of those same diseases without HIV is not AIDS.

**What about Victoria Prego [the much-publicized New York nurse who was accidentally stuck with an infected needle]?**

They say she had AIDS, from an infection in 1983, because she developed pneumonia, presumably in 1987. But if she is also on AZT, that could have been the cause of her pneumonia. AZT definitely kills cells, even those who invented it agree. In fact, that's what it was designed to do. It was designed to kill fast-growing lymphocytes, for chemotherapy in leukemia.

**I have an article by Rebecca Ward in *Nature* which says that you have been proven wrong—that you are irresponsible, and all that kind of thing. I just want you to respond to some of her critiques: "[NIAID director] Anthony Fauci disparaged the idea that behavior alone could cause AIDS, asking what risky behavior a newborn infant could be said to have."**

I have said that a newborn infant, born to an IV drug user, will inherit both the immune system and the drugs in the blood of the mother. It will be born immuno-compromised, and that's what they call AIDS. We don't have one controlled study anywhere in the field, not one controlled study, that compares the fate of newborn babies from drug-addicted mothers with antibody [to HIV], to the fate of babies growing up in the same conditions but without antibody. That would determine whether the virus plays a role in their health.

**"...Duesberg's behavior theory also fails to explain why AIDS appeared only in the past decade..."**

The drug scene developed in the last 10 to 20 years in the United States. Many things about our lifestyles changed dramatically. That's not a judgment, it's just a fact.

**It says that you have "...outraged health-care workers by suggesting that AIDS patients abandon treatment with drugs meant to control the virus, and by claiming that, in fact, heterosexuals need not use condoms or change their sexual practices..."**

Yes, I mean, I have said there is no proof that HIV is the cause of AIDS, and it's just a hypothesis which I consider unlikely on top of it, but certainly it's no more than a hypothesis. Why should I give this hypothesis preference over the hypothesis that we're going to be invaded by the Martians next week? Why shouldn't we spend all of our money in building an interplanetary system to protect us from the Martian invasion? I think I have the same right to call them irresponsible for not participating in this interplanetary defense system to keep the Martians out of this planet.

No, seriously speaking, why doesn't anybody think they are irresponsible for giving AZT when they don't even know what it's doing—when they don't know if the virus is causative or even, if it is, how AZT could be working against an inactive virus. Here they are involved in scientific fraud charges—Gallo, Baltimore and others—and I'm the one who gets called "irresponsible" all the time.

The HIV hypothesis became national dogma, and they set policies before it was ever proven. This is contrary to any other scientific process that I've ever witnessed or been part of. When you had a theory before, you had to prove it, had to convince your peers, you had to do convincing experiments before it was accepted. In particular before it was accepted by the Department of Health, which usually implied a much higher level of scrutiny, when it affected human life and human well-being.





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"...Scientific acceptance for his ideas about AIDS, never very high, seems to be sinking." How do you respond to that?

Well, maybe that used to be true, but it's changing. I think now, clearly, my acceptance is rising a little bit. There are several scientists who are coming around, saying that I may be right.

I think the hypothesis is beyond repair. The two possible pillars of support commonly cited are either the virology or the epidemiology. Initially, my point of departure was to question the virology, since I am a virologist. And as we pointed out, there is too little virus, too few T-cells are infected, and the virus is not active at the time the host is dying or developing disease. And that hasn't changed, embarrassingly enough, despite major efforts. Despite an annual \$1 billion investment in the biology of HIV, no explanation has come up. In fact, what we talked about two or three years ago has been confirmed entirely. *The New York Times*—they are scrambling for a new AIDS cause every week now, whereas it used to be totally clear, only two years ago, that HIV was causing everything.

And what about the activists? How do you feel when they say that you're "homophobic" for saying that AIDS could be caused by environmental or behavioral factors? Are you in fact, making a moralistic judgment on gays when you say this?

I want to know what homophobic means, actually.

That you have an intrinsic distaste for gay people,

## "In the long run, the truth does catch up with science."

and you're biased by that.

But "homo" means human. "Intrinsic distaste for humans?" I mean, I feel that way a lot lately I guess. (laughs)

No, but seriously, how do you respond?

Well, if I were so homophobic, why would I care how they die? If I wanted them to die, I would promote Fauci and Broder's AZT therapy program. I don't think they are logical. If I were homophobic, I would say HIV causes AIDS and they're spreading it, wouldn't I? Nothing is more homophobic than saying AIDS is caused and spread by this virus.

One doctor I interviewed, the head of an AIDS ward who was too scared for his job to go on the record, said, when we discussed you, "I don't know whether he's right or wrong. He makes a lot of sense, but the one thing that I always wonder is, 'Why did Duesberg do it?' Because he really didn't need to. He was so secure in his position as a scientist, he could have lived, and lived well, happily ever after. Why would he want to jump in the fire like this?" Was there ever a choice in your mind?

Well, I made the same mistake with oncogenes [cancer-causing genes]. I exposed that certain findings

about cellular oncogenes were incorrect and untrue. If I had played my cards politically correct, I might have been up there with the Nobel laureates—those who got the 1989 Nobel Prize for work on oncogenes that have yet to cause cancer. I raised some points about that, and it hurt me a whole lot. I rained on their parade, and it cost me a lot of friends.

Okay, so you did that, so you were already known as a trouble-maker...

Yes, but with AIDS there has been a violent reaction. Much more is at stake here in terms of careers and immediate commercial benefits from diagnostics and therapies. That's why with AIDS, I say the burden of proof is on them. I don't make a penny off of being right. In that sense, at least, I am clean—and almost stupid, if you want to know. Because if I had just worked with them, I would be much better off.

Did you realize what you were up against?

In retrospect, I think maybe not. I didn't anticipate such a violent reaction. I thought we were all interested in finding the truth. I thought I would, in fact, help science and help, in this case, society, for the first time. There was a social responsibility. Before AIDS, retrovirology was a totally academic field. I thought, here are a group of people who, as taxpayers, have invested in me rather generously for the last 20 years to do research on retroviruses. I should at least use that expertise to pay them back with the best

Continued on page 139

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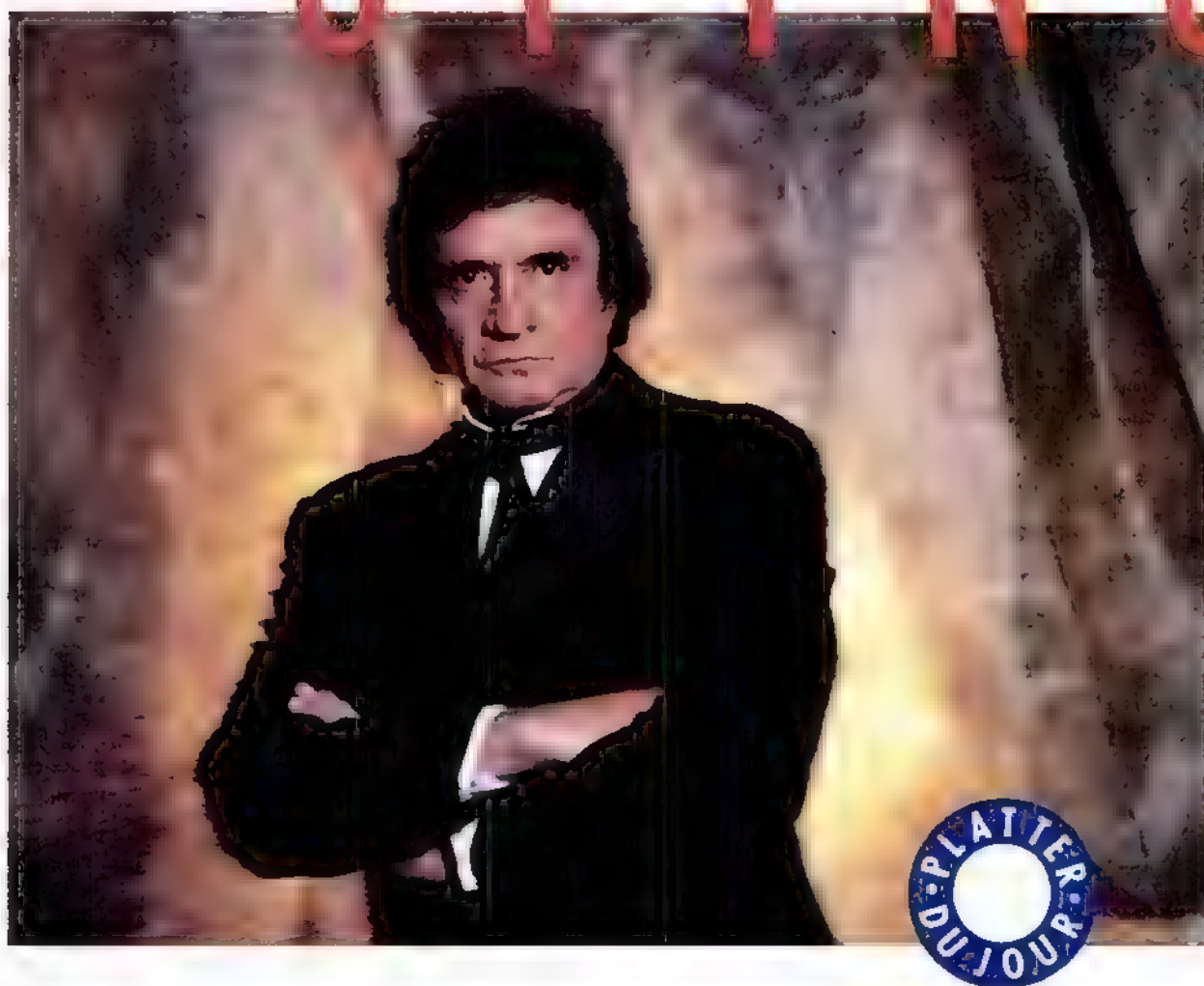
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# SPINS



Edited by  
Karen Schoemer

**Johnny Cash**  
*Boom Chicka Boom*  
Mercury/PolyGram

I'm tempted to call *Boom Chicka Boom* the ultimate Johnny Cash album, but given that the Man in Black is celebrating his 35th year in the business, has charted more than 100 singles and has recorded many more albums than I've heard, for me to call this one the Paradigmatic Johnny would be presumptuous. Still, *Boom Chicka Boom* is an interestingly self-conscious work, starting with the title, which describes the rhythm of virtually every Johnny Cash song, a sort of galloping waltz beat. Just about every song here goes boom-chicka-boom, chicka-boom, chicka boom...

There are many rock fans who admire

Cash in theory (as the country guy who covers Dylan songs, and who, in his rockabilly days, rivaled Jerry Lee as a wildman, but who wins when he's actually boom-chicka-booming). They'll be wincing mightily during the album's first single, "A Backstage Pass." A novelty tune about Cash's visit to a Willie Nelson concert, it exhibits a kind of corniness unheard in pop music these days. "There were wackos and weirdos, dingbats and dodos," Cash rumbles, "There was leather and lace and every minority race..." Now, Cash has always been shameless—this is, after all, the guy who once recorded a tune about the car used in "The Dukes of Haz-

zard"—but it's a measure of Cash's stubbornness that he didn't bury "A Backstage Pass" on the second side, instead, he uses it to lead off the whole damn album.

Things get better fast. "Cat's in the Cradle" is easier to listen to than it ever was coming from Harry Chapin. Then Cash offers two pretty compositions, "Farmer's Almanac," a pastoral sketch, and "Don't Go Near the Water," an overstated but heartfelt anti-pollution creed reminding you that Cash is one of his genre's greatest liberals. His covers include a fine version of the solemn country classic "Family Bible."

And then there's "Hidden Shame," a

gorgeous song about romantic betrayal and guilt, featuring one of Cash's most commanding yet understated performances. When he murmurs, "The blame and the torture and the misery / Must they be my secrets for eternity?" you hurt for him while you race to look at the album credits for the author of this careful, hard-boiled song. Surprise: It's Elvis Costello, complete with boom-chicka-boom melody!

Cash is working here with the same small group of musicians who accompanied him on his acclaimed stripped-down, back-to-basics tour last year. At 58, he sounds renewed—lively and eager. There have been times in Cash's career when his boom-chicka-boom sounded like the clomp-clomp of an old mule. This time around, it's as brisk as the loping strides of a racehorse

—Ken Tucker



**The Chills**  
*Submarine Bells*  
Slash/Warner Bros.

**M**artin Phillipps has a way with words. During his 10 years as singer/songwriter/guitarist for the Chills,

New Zealand's leading folk-punk band, Phillipps has written more than 200 songs. The verbal volley he jets loose on *Submarine Bells* (the Chills' Slash/Warner Bros. debut after singles, EPs and an album on NZ indie Flying Nun) may have you fumbling for lyric sheet and dictionary, deciphering lines like "Effloresce and de.iquesce—carefree sparkling effervesce / Sparks ignite the starry-eyed—soon a supemova." I never knew deiquesce was a word Phillipps knows. He's rock's most precise enunciator, pronouncing every sibilant and aspirate. And he creates a melody as ilting as the lyric, so suddenly "Effloresce and Deliquesce" is the sweetest gem ever birthed by such a pretense-portent title.

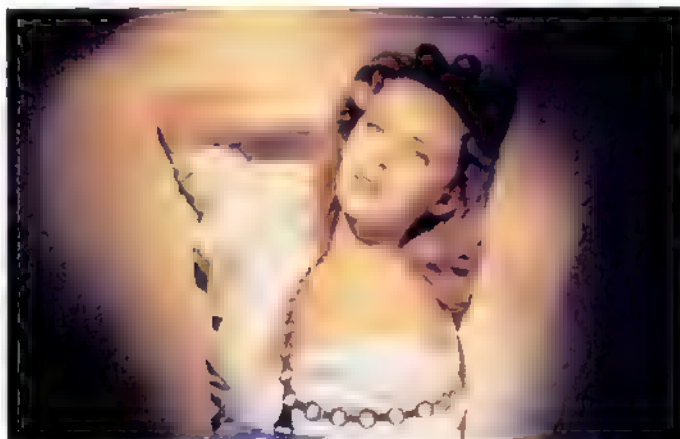
Phillipps is not pretentious. The only allusions he makes on *Submarine Bells* are to television, Swamp Thing comics, and the Byrds. Phillipps surrounds himself with word constructions because he is afraid of what would be there without them. "Nothing fine enough to say / Nothing worth anything—nothing worth nothing / Nothing left in this lump of gray / That even vaguely says I love you in a way that pleases me."

Phillipps's muttering of sweet nothings recalls Van Morrison's spewing of love on *Astral Weeks* (a concise illustration of how rock romanticism has become punk existentialism), and I'm not sure which Phillipps fears most: love, nothing, or that "I love you" means nothing. Several songs on *Submarine Bells* mourn separation; Dunedin's Dylan spent more than a year abroad signing his soul to lecherous record companies and recording his follow-up to 1988's *Brave Words*. *Submarine Bells* is more veiled, cantankerous and enigmatic than its predecessor. The production by Gary Smith (Pixies, Throwing Muses) is not as muddy as on *Brave Words*; at points ("Familiarity Breeds Contempt") it's George Martin-ish genius, but Smith never quite clicks into the way Phillipps's word-perfect melodies

steer the songs' flow. James Stephenson's drumming likewise sounds too rock-record conventional. Bassist Justin Harwood and keyboardist Andrew Todd have worked with Phillipps the longest and they know how to complement him—punctuating, echoing, answering his verbal barrage.

Phillipps writes with the poetry of a Van Morrison, the economy of a Pete Shelly and the range of a Paul McCartney. He moves from the snarling clip of "Familiarity" to the expansive sigh of "Don't Be Memory" with such ease that the songs almost seem plastic, as if his wall of words had become all surface, covering what's beneath. You have to go mining for Phillipps's soul, but you can hear it, down below, like submarine bells groaning "in greens and grays submerged sound sublime."

—Evelyn McDonnell



Kylie Minogue, queen of galloping sub-disco pop

**Kylie Minogue**  
*Enjoy Yourself*  
Geffen

**S**he's young, she's blond, she's cute, she's... Kylie! To the current generation of British and Australian teens,

this diminutive dollybird from Down Under is Madonna, Paula Abdul and a New Kid on the Block all wrapped up in one adorable package of sparkling teeth and tousled hair. Star of the cheesy Aussie soap opera "Neighbors," which airs twice daily on the BBC, she hit the jackpot in 1988 with her Stock/Aitken/Warnerman-produced debut album *Kylie*, selling more copies in the UK than U2's *The Joshua Tree*.

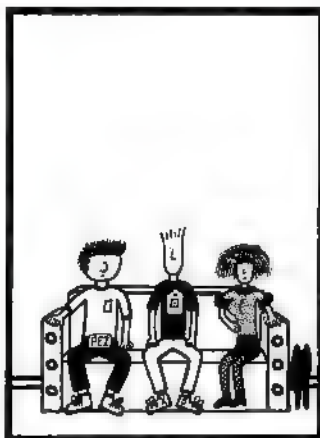
On her second LP, *Kylie* has gone for more of the same S/A/W galloping sub-disco pop. The production on "Hand on Your Heart," the album opener, is bright and fresh—the aural equivalent of mouthwash. But after half a dozen tracks that sound the same, it turns stale.

Their hooks may be strong enough to land Moby Dick, but S/A/W's songs come straight off-the-peg, fitting Kylie as loosely as they do other S/A/W stable

artists like Rick Astley, Sinitta and Donna Summer. Since nothing is tailored to fit the individual's requirements, none of the S/A/W acts is afforded the luxury of a personality.

But does Kylie deserve better? Well, yes, actually, because she can sort of

## Little Satty's Quest for Music by Mark Blackwell





sing. While she may not be up to tackling Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*, there's a hint of a sweet voice on slower songs like "Tears on My Pillow," a remake of the 1958 Little Anthony hit.

Stock/Aiken/Waterman are starting to wear out their welcome. Kylie should bite the hand that feeds her before it strangles her.

—Jane Garcia

with an audience, much less the industry. Nonetheless, in 1984 Hanoi Rocks had some US success with their last (and best) album, *Two Steps from the Move*. Then on December 8, 1984, drummer Razzle (aka Nicholas Dingley) died in a car accident caused by Mötley Crüe's Vince Neil. Hanoi Rocks disbanded shortly afterwards.

But Hanoi Rocks' influence continues. Since Guns N' Roses are big fans (Hanoi's "Underwater World," a slice-of-street-life single from *Two Steps*, has the chorus, "Welcome to the ocean / Welcome to the sea / Welcome to the jungle / Deep inside of me"), they've just reissued the first four Hanoi Rocks albums on their custom label, Uzi Suicide, through Geffen. The Gunners know quality when they hear it. Hanoi Rocks started good and got steadily better. *Bangkok Shocks*, *Saigon Shakes*, *Hanoi Rocks* (1981) is raw but disciplined, setting the band's basic pattern: McCoy's tight, consistent three-minute songs, tons of keening vocal harmonies, sax and harmonica from Monroe (his yelping vocals are the weak point), tumbling interlocked guitars and a traditionally funky rhythm section. "Don't Never Leave Me" is classic, a hard, rain-soaked ballad, which was remade on *Two Steps*.

Despite an increase in confidence and polish, *Oriental Beat* (1982) and *Self Destruction Blues* (1983) are essentially the same formula. *Oriental Beat* is more sex-obsessed (the title track finds them wooing Asian women of many lands, while in "Visitor" they promise to come and go quickly). *Self Destruction Blues* is perhaps their most derivative work, and a bit patchy, since it collects a Finnish five-song EP with singles and B-sides. It contains the band's first hit single, "Love's an Injection," a bit of cinematic fluff with a pulsing chorus—"Love's hot / Love's an injection"—you had to snicker at.

The band's turning point was *Back to Mystery City* (1983), which opens with a stab at instrumental folk music, "Strange Boys Play Weird Openings," and positively blasts from there. "Tooting Bec Wreck" is their best song about being wasted and proud of it, and the pensive "Until I Get You" is unusually, yet convincingly, sensitive. Monroe's voice erupts into the insatiable snarl you'd always expected.

Today, the members of Hanoi Rocks are still waiting on solo success. Monroe recently released his second album *Not Fakin' It*; McCoy's assembling a new band for PolyGram, bassist Sam Yaffa's in Jetboy; after playing in the band Cheap Nasty, guitarist Nasty Suicide was deported, and original drummer Gyp Casino went to Sweden to be a schoolteacher. You wonder what he tells the kids.

—Tom Nardlie



### Hanoi Rocks

*Bangkok Shocks, Saigon Shakes, Hanoi Rocks*  
Uzi Suicide/Geffen

### Hanoi Rocks

*Oriental Beat*  
Uzi Suicide/Geffen

### Hanoi Rocks

*Self Destruction Blues*  
Uzi Suicide/Geffen

### Hanoi Rocks

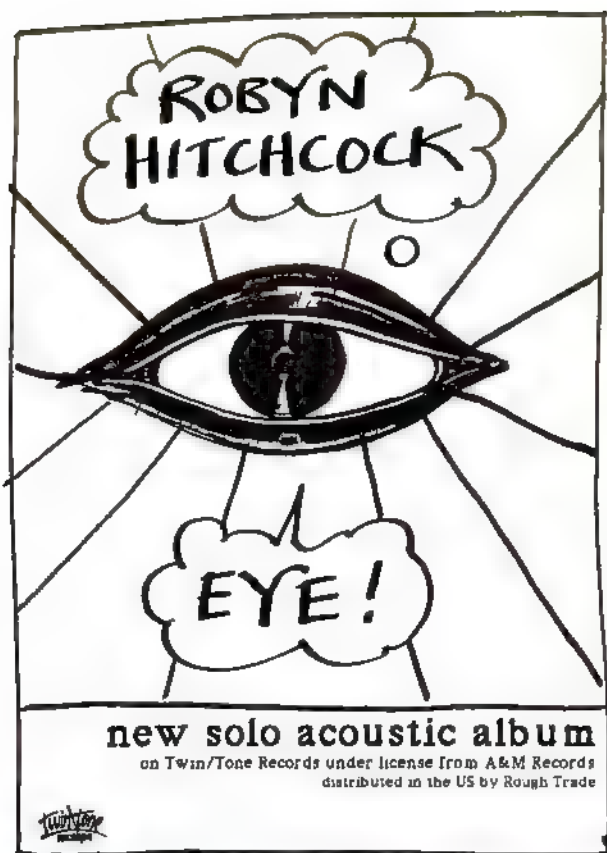
*Back to Mystery City*  
Uzi Suicide/Geffen

**H**anoi Rocks are probably the great lost hard-rock band of the 80s. Formed in Helsinki, Finland, in 1980, they were a sexy, hooky distillation of Chuck Berry double-stop riffs, the debauched chic (and second-hand Berryisms) of early glam, and assorted late-70s influences (or outright pilferage) from ska, punk and metal, even the rejuvenated Kinks and Stones. They were shameless, uncomfortably androgynous (d'g the cover of *Back to Mystery City*, where lead singer Mike Monroe and guitarist Andy McCoy grope for the same salami—Monroe's) and wore those stupid little black hats years before Debbie Gibson.

More importantly, Hanoi Rocks straddled these sub-genres with the unself-conscious ease of kids from an icy Finnish seaport where US/UK trends blended into a single flow of imported culture, and exciting music was simply that. Their five studio albums showed an increasing versatility and momentary weirdness within a simple, barrel-house rock context—Hanoi Rocks weren't easily classified, and the instant familiarity of their songs didn't always connect



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Rush (l-r): Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson

**Rush**  
*Presto*  
Atlantic

**Lush**  
*Scar*  
4AD

**T**oo old for glam, too schooled for pop raunch and way, way too ugly for teen lust appeal, Rush have nothing better to do than forge some kind of unholy New Age/pop-metal fusion. And they're doing it: *Presto* levitates with strange keyboard mists, unrock riffs, soaring choruses, bass strings tinkling like Tibetan bells. To his credit, drummer/lyricist Neil Peart hasn't lost his touch with rock as rite of passage, as in the strong "Scars": "I've stood upon my mountaintop / And shouted at the sky / Walked above the pavement / With my senses amplified." And even if he ends up fashioning spirit quests for cyberuppies, the man's still trying to grasp something that keeps slipping away from him, a failure I always admire.

Peart drums with all the overbright excess he brings to his lyrics, and his thick runs, tasty cymbals and viable world beats add menace to what is otherwise pretty lame goo. Unfortunately, the other two guys I worshipped when I was 13 have drooped. Now that Geddy Lee's sincere and ponytailed, I truly miss his earlier vocal impersonations of Donald Duck booting crystal meth. And though "Show Don't Tell," "The Pass" and the eco-apocalyptic "Red Tide" all nail the mind, guitarist Alex Lifeson has left his most masterful chunks behind him. *Presto* is about halfway between a dud and the stunning rabbit Rush probably wanted to pull from the hat.

—Erik Davis

**I**n England they've learned to pretend things—like that an underground of white guitar pop still somehow matters; like that new bands of tow-headed and loose-sweatered post-adolescents are cause for excitement. So it is that Lush, the latest 4AD signing, both matter and are exciting. Who's to argue with an EP where each of the six tracks could be a theme for a thoughtful art house movie about teen angst? Seriously, who's to argue with six hits on one record? A female voices/guitars and male rhythm section quartet, Lush exist in some mauve-and-pearly grey area between labelmates the Pixies (guitars as ratty) and the Cocteau Twins (melodies as grandiose); and, as a consequence, they define a polite midpoint between the two principal connotations of their moniker. Their songs, like much of the better British indie stuff, live in a different time—of classic pop structures where the placement of the hook is as important, of rockers





that harken back to the glistening twang and fervid howl of body sawing of decade-ago Siouxsie and the Banshees, of ballads that switch to fine mellow grooves with the snap of a snare. Scar is as pretty as a magenta sunset blanketing the horizon—as Christmas carols sung amidst bonfires of torched grunts smeared mattresses on the crest of a landfill moor.

—Don Howland

## Michael Penn March RCA

On his cool debut LP *March*, Michael Penn journeys through a dark realm of romantic misery. Sean's better behaved brother hasn't painted his masterpiece yet; this calow singer/songwriter sometimes hides behind taut arrangements or literary maneuvers when he ought to spill his guts. But the lad bares enough of a soul to make you wonder what else lurks within.

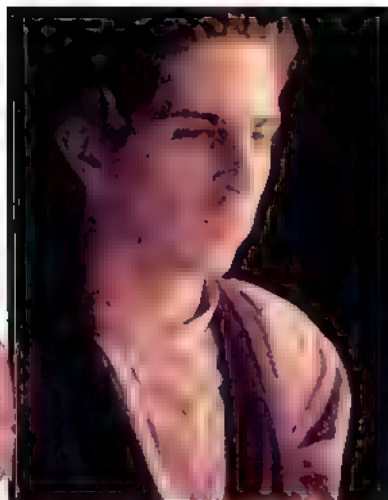
Voice edged with raspy regret, Penn accepts rejection to a perky beat in "No Myth," glumly compares love to a viper in "Cupid's Got a Gun" and braces for intimate strife in the lovely "Battle Room." Even happier moments like the thundering "Evenfall" find Penn sounding a sour note: "It's a mystery you can't see / Why you'd still be here with me." Tales of warped amour make fascinating listening when carried to extremes, of course. Penn's problem is that he doesn't go far enough often enough. From the stiff drum programs to overly precise singing, too much control keeps Mr. Pitiful from mining the depths of those woeful grooves. Add a few ragged edges, a few primal screams, and you'd be smack dab in psychodrama city.

Still, *March* nicely showcases Penn's strengths, including crisp, folk-rock guitar and sumptuous melodies. (Bryan

Adams or Rod Stewart could turn the elegant theatrics of "Invisible" into platinum.) Michael Penn has earned his music-crafting merit badge. Now it's time to get crazy.

—Jon Young

come known for what's called the Davis desert sound: lengthy, swirling guitar jams topped by brooding lyrics about a highly imaginary version of the New True West. Thin White Rope singer/songwriter Guy Kyser was born and raised in a tiny dot of a town in the mid-



Passive auteur Michael Penn



Thin White Rope (l-r): Steve Siegrist, Matthew Abourezk, Guy Kyser and Roger Nuskol.

## Thin White Rope Sack Full of Silver Frontier/RCA

The city of Davis lies right in the heart of Cal from a farm country, nowhere near a desert of any kind. Yet many Davis-based rock bands have be-

come known for what's called the Davis desert sound: lengthy, swirling guitar jams topped by brooding lyrics about a highly imaginary version of the New True West. Thin White Rope singer/songwriter Guy Kyser was born and raised in a tiny dot of a town in the mid-

dle of the Mojave desert, which may be why his take on the topic is so much more convincing. *Sack Full of Silver*, Thin White Rope's fourth and most accomplished album, could serve as a soundtrack for a life lived in a landscape scarred by the sky's violence. They also manage, on at least three cuts—the title one, "On the Floor"

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and "Yoo Doo Right," a hooky love-chant with a martial metal beat—to break straight out of the Davis hypnotic-dueling-guitar ghetto and into the mainstream.

Thin White Rope is big on booming drums and looming bass lines and the swirling-together of Kyser and Roger Kunkel's slow guitar leads. Kyser is one of the few on the alternative-rock scene who has a truly distinctive voice—loud and growly, with a strangely emotional timbre, like an amplified Tom Waits. He tends to keep his distance from songs about relationships or love ("Yoo Doo Right" might be called a love song, but it sounds more like an obsessive-compulsive's twisted take on Bo Diddley's "Mona"). He writes instead about landscapes, weather, prehistory, water, jungle, airfields... the objects painted by many modernists. And like those vague, but emotionally sweeping paintings, *Sack Full of Silver* concentrates on tension building—throbbing, menacing and muttering all the way to its end, with the occasional pretty acoustic fill thrown in for light relief.

Gina Arnold

### Earth, Wind & Fire *Heritage* Columbia

**F**inishing their second year in their second incarnation, Earth, Wind & Fire has forged into the 90s with an album that deftly airbrushes their seminal 70s sound with strokes of modernity. For old-time devotees, *Heritage*, EWF's 18th album since 1971, the second since the group reformed in late 1987, reads like classic Earth, Wind & Fire. Fortunately, instead of sounding like old guys in jump suits on a comeback tour

or a nostalgia trip, EWF's newest kicks with some genuine enthusiasm. The music isn't new or startling, nor is it overrun by the presence of The Boys on the title track and MC Hammer on "Wanna Be the Man" and "For the Love of You." Although EWF lacks the aggressive edge of New Jack Swing, their use of rap is similar, and since EWF has always been about style, they wear the genre well.

What this means specifically is that the slam of the bass and drums is smooth and the vocals are grounded in sweet melodies, the lyrics often float on the soaring falsetto of Philip Bailey or on the warm, reassuring growl of Maurice White. So rather than the harsh chants of hip hop, EWF continues to deliver bright, cheery harmonies set in crisp call-and-response patterns laced together with dreamy musical interludes. Most important, however, EWF continues to promote self-realization, spirituality and gentility. You might say that *Heritage* is one of those nice records, a danceable antidote to the greed and cynicism in which we all get to wallow, like it or not. As usual, EWF errs on the side of sentimental clichés. The bouncy "Takin' Chances" and the more-or-less stomping "Wanna Be the Man," for example, don't so much bristle as they espouse an upwardly mobile philosophy.

There are moments on *Heritage*, such as the spiky "Good Time" with Sly Stone, that add spontaneous energy, but EWF mainly fills in the formula. When they sing about love, it's more romance than fleshy passion, and in "King of the Groove," they observe that "everybody wants to ride in a limousine, but nobody wants to drive." *Heritage* is essentially about pride, peaceful coexistence, and sharing the wealth. Who could object?

Don Palmer

Philip Bailey (second from right) with Earth, Wind & Fire





**Law and Order**  
*Guilty of Innocence*  
MCA

**Shark Island**  
*Law of the Order*  
Epic

**A**t last, commercial metal for people who hate commercial metal. I don't mean the sound—I mean that horrible Fuck-Chicks-Drink-Jack-Be-a-Rock-God attitude that makes you wanna walk up to those designer-studded dudes and slap 'em a couple of times. Like, *get over yourself*

The Attitude sells zillions of otherwise ghastly records (just ask Warrant).



**Shark Island (clockwise from left): Spencer Sercombe, Greg Ellis, Chris Heilmann and Richard Black**

which only makes Law and Order and Shark Island's approach all the more admirable. Both bands have the commercial metal sound in spades: flashy, riff-o-rama guitars, plenty of energy, and radio friendly anthemic hooks. But how many metal bands can sing a line like "Why can't people live their lives believing in a vision/and look to the sky with loving eyes of hope and devotion" with a straight face—and not only mean it, but make it work because they *really* mean it? Law and Order pull off a plea for racial harmony ("Soul Inside"), songs about the homeless ("In the Shelter"), media manipulation ("Possession of Control") and an aching sad and thoughtful tune about a father-son relationship gone wrong ("No Love Lost"). Their stint recording in Memphis, Tennessee, has given their music an old-time blues edge that stomps all over the glossy Led Zep rip-off school (Whitesnake, Bonham). And like the cool guys they are, they're putting their money where their mouths are—donating the proceeds of their upcoming single, "Delta Prison Blues," to the Delta Blues Museum.

Shark Island's approach is more personal. They've managed to remain decent guys in the land of opportunistic

*Continued on page 136*



**Law and Order (I-r):** Sean Carmody, Rob Steele, Phil Allocco and Shane



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# BLUE LIGHT SPECIAL



**E**lvis Presley first set out to sing like Dean Martin. Dean Martin never set out to sing at all. He was dealing back-room blackjack when, one night after work, his pals prompted him to take the stage at a local nightclub. He left with an offer of a place in the band at \$50 a week. "Hell," said Dean, who was then still Dino Crochetti of Steubenville, Ohio, and an ace at palming silver dollars off his bosses' table, "I steal more than that in a week."

He was happy enough not to be a barber like his father, or still working in the steel mills, or back fighting as "Kid Crochet," an untalented \$10-a-bout welterweight. He'd mined coal, pumped gas, jerked soda, stolen hubcaps and carted bootleg liquor around eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania before he found his calling as a croupier, but there was nothing in his resume to suggest an itch for the arts.

He gave it a shot anyway, quit after a month, was persuaded by friends to try again. (They staked him money to take up the slack in his earnings.) Eventually, golden voice won out over golden arm, and Dean Martin—27 years old already—was born. It might as easily have fallen out otherwise. But for one impromptu performance, he might still be dealing "21," and happily. (In later Vegas days, he'd sometimes take a turn behind the tables after a show.) Overweening ambition was never his hallmark, and he seems to have approached his whole career with a kind of relaxed professionalism—or a professional relaxation—that has its perfect analog in the unstrained, unstudied music that wafted casually from his throat. Martin managed to make not only a life, but an art, of doing what came naturally.

In 1946, Jerry Lewis, 20 years old and not yet insufferable, called him to Atlantic City to see if they could work together. After one disastrous show that almost put them on the unemployment line, they improvised an act as anarchic in its context as the Sex Pistols were in theirs—they threw food, squirted seltzer, broke plates, cut the customer's clothes to ribbons and woke up the next day to a line around the block. Martin and Lewis tore up the

nation's nightclubs, at exponentially rising fees, then went to Hollywood and made 16 movies in 10 years. Dean signed to Capitol Records, recorded "That's Amore" (the only song I know to contain the word "drool") and became the idol of Elvis, among others.

This, children, was of course all before our time. Some of you, if you are like me, may recall firsthand the Dino of the 60s, the cinematic incarnation of Matt Helm and the host of a breathtakingly loose TV variety show, for which he (famously) never rehearsed and into which his flubs were incorporated as style. It dovetailed neatly with his self-created image as The Constant Drunk—you could still play that stuff for laughs then ("I'm not drinking anymore—but I'm not drinking any less," is the crack that opened his first post-Jerry solo show at the Sands, though the amber liquid he downed onstage is supposed to have been apple juice.) I remember Dino's Lodge, which stood at 77 Sunset Strip and can recall the twilight of the Clan, aka the Rat Pack, the Sinatra-led mutual admiration society that bid to define what was "swinging" in the days before the Beatles made them finally look their age. Clan members performed together in Las Vegas (a scrap of this is preserved on Sinatra's album *A Man and His Music*) and in the movies—"Ocean's Eleven," "Sergeants Three," "Four for Texas," "Robin and the Seven Hoods." In the early 60s, Dean and Frank and Sammy Davis, Jr. all signed to Frank's label, Reprise, but most of Dino's recorded corpus is long out of circulation.

Capitol Records, bucking that trend in a small way, have brought up from the vaults a fistful of Martin, spanning the years 1948 to 1960. Reissued as part of the label's *Collector's Series*, these 20 sides form a slyly appealing set that, while unspectacular in its particulars, forms a persuasive whole, paints a compelling landscape. Few of these tunes, which largely attempt nothing more (nor less) than to express the ineffable enormity of the singer's love for the offstage innamorata, are bound for the ASCAP Hall of Fame—many weren't even hits in their time—but they work their way sliverlike un-



der your skin. The swing charts chug nicely, the ballads swoop like sea birds in a mural on the wall of an Italian restaurant. Mediterranean melodies and bolero beats abound; violins, mandolins and accordions make a plush, imported sofa for the pitching of singerly Sicilian woo.

Like many if not all pop singers of his generation, Martin based his style on Bing Crosby's, intimate but basically untroubled. "I can deliver a song with an easy style," he said once, "but a lot of us crooners get by because we're fairly painless." Martin could be so painless that even the trade papers sometimes failed to notice he sang, titling him simply "film star" or "night-club and screen comedian." No house afire, his voice is nevertheless both attractive and distinctive, a husky baritone with a faint, faintly operatic sob in the clinches and a laconic drawl throughout. And if he has none of Sinatra's awesome pugnacity, none of his drive to haunt a lyric like the ghost of the man who died to write it, Martin's innate jauntiness, his willingness to clown, to sound once in a while like his shirt's untucked, establish him as a marvel of grit and dynamism next to such other, more well-kempt Italian warblers as Perry Como and Vic Damone.


—Robert Lloyd



Accidental crooner Dean Martin

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## Works In Progress



Bruce Springsteen

Bruce Springsteen is working on a new album. Don't rule out the possibility of a tour in the fall... **De La Soul** are working on the follow-up to *3 Feet High and Rising* at Callope Studios in New York with Prince Paul producing. Tentative release date is late April. **R.E.M.'s** feisty **Michael Stipe** and **Boogie Down Productions' KRS-One** share a concern for the environment, and the two are recording a single in New York about the topic. **Lloyd Cole's** solo LP should be out this month. **Information Society** are working on their second LP... **Todd Rundgren** produced the new album by **The Pursuit of Happiness**, due in April. The title is *One Sided Story*.

**Steetsasonic** are working on their third LP, *Blood, Sweat and No Tears*... **Rhino** is releasing a three-CD or four-LP/cassette box set of the collected readings of **Jack Kerouac**. It includes rare recordings from 1958 that have been out of print for thirty years—"Poetry for the Beat Generation" and "Blues and Haikus"—as well as unreleased material from these sessions. Other unreleased readings are a spoken word performance from the "Steve Allen Plymouth Hour" and a 1958 lecture, "Is There a Beat Generation?" Look for *The Jack Kerouac Collection* in mid-April... **Dead Milkmen** are working on their new album, *Metaphysical Graffiti*, in Austin. The first single is called "Buffy Saint Marie" and the album is being engineered by the Milkmen's Minister of Ignomotion, **Professor Gruff**... **Edie Brickell, Belinda Carlisle, Indigo Girls** with **Michael Stipe** and **Erasure** with **Lene Lovich** are among the artists contributing to *Tame Yourself*, an album produced by **People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals** and sponsored by **John Paul Mitchell Systems**. All proceeds will go to **PETA**. Also confirmed for the album's August release are **Jane Wiedlin, River Phoenix, Fetchin' Bones, k.d. lang** and **Exene Cervenka**.

Continued from page 133

assholes; maybe because they have some European roots, they see their L.A. milieu as a place where desperate people prostitute themselves for their art ("Shake for Me"). Amid a scene where a backstage blowjob constitutes a relationship, the women in *Shark Island's* songs are objects of involvement, betrayal, longing ("I called you up just to hear your breath on the phone"). There's a tinge of insecurity—like the cool metal kid who, deep in his heart, feels like a dweeb. A vague gloominess and pessimism gives their finely crafted tunes their originality, which is coupled with a near-perfect ear for the catchy hook. Give a listen to, say, "Passion to Ashes" and see if you can get it out of your head. Can't be done.

—Daina Darzin

## The Cramps Stay Sick Enigma

The Cramps have always understood those fundamental building blocks that made early rock'n'roll what it was—scary, lustful, exciting and, above all, funny. "Do you think we're doing the Devil's music?" Jerry Lee Lewis says Elvis once asked him. "I looked at him, and said 'Boy, you are the devil!'" Lux Interior has no qualms with this stuff being the devil's music (or the sex and drugs music, either). In fact, he often celebrates the fact, albeit with tongue slightly in cheek. "Just give me that goddamn rock'n'roll / The kind of stuff that don't save souls," he sings on the Cramps's first new American release in six years, borrowing the tune from Bob Seger's "Old Time Rock and Roll" to make his point.

Seger's tune isn't the only thing the Cramps borrow on *Stay Sick*. Much of this band's charm has been in its love for and synthesis of American junk culture, of which rock music was once the most important part. "Bikini Girls With Machine Guns," which merges Frankie and Annette with Russ Meyer and Rambo, delivered in classic blues braggadocio style. They update Elvis's "Hard Headed Woman" for the potentially sexual-psychotic 90s, and call it "All Women Are Bad." "Journey To The Center Of A Girl" not only borrows its title from the Amboy Dukes, but its music nearly lock, stock and barrel from "Wipe Out." The Cramps not only get away with it, but they make it sound almost as exciting as the first time you heard "Wipe Out." But then this is a band that can cover a silly old song like "Shortnin' Bread" and turn it into one of the most danceable things you've heard in a long time.

Poison Ivy's guitar work has grown by leaps and bounds since the Cramps re-





The Cramps (l-r): Candy Del Mar, Nick Knox, Poison Ivy and Lux Interior.

leased their first record over a decade ago, and she can now conjure up all the early rockabilly and surf greats, from Paul Burlison and James Burton to the Ventures, filtering it through an entire history of punk. In fact, all hilarity aside, it's the playing that makes *Stay Sick* one of the most satisfying grunge records since the Cramps' released *A Date With Elvis* as a British import in '86.

Bill Holdship



**The Vulgar Boatmen**  
*You and Your Sister*  
Independent Label Alliance

**S**adly, and no doubt an indication of our Age, how Lou Reed made his statement on his last record, *New York*, became more important than what he

said. It was good to hear a forceful testimony, but setting speeches to music has never been my favorite listening. That's why I prefer the debut album by the Vulgar Boatmen.

Though the Boatmen sound nothing like the Velvet Underground, they share an appreciation for songs. *You and Your Sister* (produced by Walter Salas Hu-mara, frontman for the Silos) doesn't speak in headlines, creates no slogans, and by talking about what's just outside, makes itself universal in appeal. This band's songs tell more by telling less. "Mary Jane," a love song, uses the tension between the hushed vocals and the rocking band to indicate that the singer's devotion to the girl borders on the pathological. The sparsely strummed, slightly cacophonous acoustic guitar chords in "Drink More Coffee" convey a restless sense of frustration, and the grandiosely titled "Change the World All Around" begins with the out-my front-door line, "Last night I was standing in the driveway calling your name." Words don't even work anymore in "Margaret Says." The singer starts the line, "And I tell Margaret..." then breaks into mono-syllabic "bum bum" sounds. "Bum bum" could never communicate in speeches, but the Vulgar Boatmen know that in songs it is transcendent.

Robert Gordon

Derek Ridgers/London Feature '93

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**del Amitri waking hours**

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# WORLD BEAT!



## The Lambada Craze

Column by Richard Gehr

I love "Lambada"—the international hit song, that is, not the overhyped, waddling belly mield and wormy conga line from Brazil. And I like each of the half-dozen versions I've heard. My favorite so far is Teresa Guerra's "Llorando Se Fue" (the song's original title), in which a synthesized flute recalls the song's probable origins in *saya*, the folk music made by Bolivia's African slaves. Moreover, I want to hear as many of the 50 or so current versions as possible, simply because the music sounds so happy while the lyrics say "sad," as a pantropical pulse folds merengue and zouk rhythms into a butt-rotating, 120 bpm, everydisco throb.

But I like lambada best as a baroque, 90s-style business story involving sex, music, money, marketing schemes and

cross-cultural contractual misunderstandings.

Lambada's a dance, not a type of music (though it's inspiring a lot of great music), and there exist nearly as many interpretations of its history as publishing companies and writers claiming a piece of the frozen profits from the Paris-based group Kaoma's "Lambada" single, which has sold some five million copies worldwide. The dance, minus the back arching ballroom dips and swings of its current incarnation, probably originated in Bahia, Brazil, in the 30s. Its name is said to derive from the Brazilian slang term *porrada*, meaning a hit or slap (of pounding pelvis), and then-president Getulio Vargas found it licentious enough to prohibit. Lambada then went underground, where it gathered Caribbean influences before re-emerging in the 60s. In the 80s, European tourists began picking it (and other things) up in the *lambadarias* of such Bahia resort towns as Porto Seguro and took it home.

Which is where promoters Olivier Loursac and Jean Karakos "discovered"

lambada in 1988. Whiffing the unmistakable fragrance of francs to be made, the partners purchased the international rights to hundreds of lambada-rhythmed titles from Continental, a Brazilian music publisher. According to Karakos, the deal included arrangement rights to "Llorando Se Fue," which Kaoma reworked and recorded.

A month later, Karakos claims, he and Loursac heard a remarkably similar song by Bolivian brothers Hutises and Gonzalo Hermosa. Wanting to stay on the safe side of international copyright laws, they made an agreement with them. Unfortunately, the Hermosa brothers had apparently signed similar agreements with five other parties, all of whom claimed rights to it after Kaoma's version became a European hit last summer.

"I now believe very strongly," says Karakos, former owner of the BYG and Celluloid labels in the US, "that the song was not composed by the Hermosa brothers—that it's part of the public domain, and it's a *saya* song. It's not that they have bad intentions: they

just don't know show business. The rights of musicians aren't protected in Bolivia or Brazil."

Through an aggressive marketing campaign involving an insipidly sunny Orangina-sponsored video that aired some 250 times on TF1 (France's MTV equivalent), Kaoma's "Lambada" became CBS Records' biggest-selling single ever in Europe.

Kaoma oozes inauthenticity and derivation, which, for me at least, lends it a great deal of its charm. "The intention was clear," says Karakos. "to use worldwide ethnic influences to make a pop band, like the British did in the 60s with R&B and the blues. Kaoma is a pop band and nothing else." The group was formed from Toure Kunda's rhythm section, left unemployed following the Kunda brothers' breakup. With the addition of Brazilian vocalist Loalwa Braz, Karakos and Loursac had the perfect vehicle with which to mount their international campaign. But while Kaoma is riding the lambada wave for the time being, the band strives to be polyglot in appeal.

With its Parisian, Senegalese and Antillean musicians (including former Kassav member Jacky Aconte), Kaoma combines reggae, zouk, salsa, samba and mbalax rhythms into what at worst is a purist-offending homogeneity, and at best rocks the palapa with multicultural insouciance. Hell, Karakos even dreams of inviting guest vocalists along for year-long tenures in the group.

This sort of thing drives the culture police ape shit. In Brazil, however, you'll have to look long and hard to find an unadulterated musical form, now that rock and jazz have altered the country's sambas and bossa novas (already Afro-European hybrids), as well as such Caribbean rhythms as merengue, zouk, soca and cadence. The fertile Bahia sounds lambada dancers move to mixes the above and more—it's as natural a progression as you'll find.

Two excellent compilations cash in on the lambada fad while providing danceable overviews of the Brazilian pop scene. *Los Creadores de la Lambada* (TH-Rodven) includes a number of chattering instrumentals from Para, in northwest Brazil, where lambada flourishes. More eclectic still is *Lambada Brazil* (PolyGram), which includes terrific bands (such as Tomaira and Nonato do Cavaquinho) and singers (like David Byrne ringer Margaret Menezes and Luiz Caldas), all of whom are equally authentic and diverse lambadistas.

For as Karakos asks, exasperated at a review accusing him of merchandising synthetic goods, "What is authenticity? I would like to know!"

Me too. Heard any good mambo records lately?



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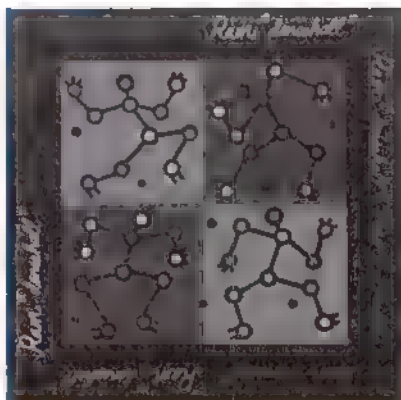
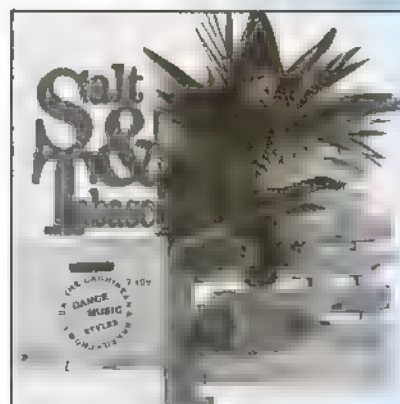
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## Pip Hop

Column by Frank Owen

# singles

**S**eduction, "Heartbeat" (Vendetta) Looking for the perfect pop product where the marketing is built into the music? Look no further than Seduction. Taking their cue from Lewis Martine and Expose, the hot production team of Cole and Clivilles—the "Jam and Lewis of house music"—set out to manufacture a multi-ethnic teen angel female vocal trio specializing in house pop rather than Latin hip-hop.

An idea whose time has come Seduction cover the old garage classic "Heartbeat" with little soulful fidelity to the original Taana Gardner version, but with lots of sound effects courtesy of Cole and Clivilles. Contrived? Certainly. Effective on the dance floor? Most definitely. Artist Jeff Koons would love this band.

**X Clan**, "Earthbound," (Fourth and Broadway). On the tribe dimensional hip, on the space funk tip, and on the Afrocentric tip are Lamumba Carson (son of renowned activist Sonny Carson) and his hip hop band of the future, X Clan. Heavily conceptual, decidedly cultural, but with a mischievous sense of fun they borrowed from George Clinton, X Clan's

follow-up to their debut single "Raise The Flag" finds them referencing their favorite colors (red, black and green), equating bass and space, and using their favorite word in abundance—"vainglorious." Art without artiness and black nationalism without humorless rhetoric.

**Digital Underground**, "The Humpty Dance," (Tommy Boy). Not my favorite track of their forthcoming album *Sex Packets*, "The Humpty Dance" is Digital Underground at their most technicolor cartoonish. A record for Booty People of all complexions.

**Tashan**, "Black Man," (Def Jam/Columbia). Unaccountably neglected in this country, Tashan is Def Jam's answer to Marvin Gaye. Combining hip hop beats and R&B passion doesn't necessarily result in New Jack Swing, as Tashan proves on "Black Man." Spiritual and mature, without any hint of crossover cowardice, Tashan is the antithesis of the type of brash, upwardly mobile, go-for-it designer soul represented by Bobby Brown—Donald Trump in a Gaultier suit.

**The Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E.**, "R A I D," (Fourth and Broadway). Not nearly as unlikely as the hip hop tape I once received from Alaska, the Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E. are six rapping Samoan brothers straight out of Los Angeles who believe in clean living and family values. Specializing in funk at it's fattest, they sound more like a go-go band than a hip hop outfit. Where's the DJ?

**D.O.D. featuring the Rolla Boyz**, "Warhol Machine," (Lime Skull). If hip hop can encompass black history, why not art history? When former English punk Richard Crowley approached Los Angeles rappers the Rolla Boyz about recording a song about Andy Warhol, the Los Angeles rappers had never heard of the deceased pop artist. On Crowley's instigation, they did some research and came up with "Warhol Machine." "Their rap expresses their feelings and viewpoints about the dead man in the white wig," says Crowley. "This is culture." Musically, this is crap but with lines like "He crushed his flesh / He fleshed his trash" and "Andy and Marilyn alive from the machine," this is a difficult record to dislike. Good idea, bad

execution.

**Professor Griff and The Last Asiatic Disciples**, "Pawis In The Game," (Skywalker Records). The repentant Professor is to be congratulated for confronting black powerlessness without resorting to anti-Semitism on his debut solo single for Luke Skywalker's Miami record label. Though Griff reportedly loathes Public Enemy producer Hank Shocklee, the samples are suspiciously PE-like. Not a great record, but a long way from being the joke that people expected. Big mouth strikes again.

**ABC**, "The Real Thing," (Mercury). Lapsed ironists ABC performing a track called "The Real Thing" is about as convincing as Guns N'Roses writing a song called "Unity." The chief pleasure here is house music pioneer Frankie Kruckles' remix of "The Real Thing" and Detroit techno-futurist Derrick May's remix of "The Greatest Love Of All"—both contained on the B-side. Proof positive that pop songs these days are no longer fixed objects but bits of semi-raw material that remixers and producers can adapt and extend endlessly.

**A Tribe Called Quest**, "I Left My Wallet In El Segundo," (Jive). They've got cultural bass in abundance (courtesy of Jamaica), great taste in old school breaks, a sly sense of humor that doesn't undermine the seriousness of their mission, and they don't hold their dicks. "I Left My Wallet In El Segundo" finds A Tribe Called Quest travelling to Mexico, which in their imaginations is a suburb of Brooklyn. Music from the neighborhood on a grand tour, A Tribe Called Quest's major theme seems to be travel. Hence, the title of their soon-coming debut album *People's Instinctual Travels And The Paths Of Rhythm*. Single of the month, no contest.

### A List:

**Lisa Stansfield**, "All Around The World" (Arista)  
**Electrotribe 101**, "Tell Me When The Fever Ended" (Mercury)  
**Mr. Fingers**, "What About This Love" (Alleviated Music)  
**Electronic**, "Getting Away With It" (Factory, import)  
**Mark Summers**, "Melt Your Body," (Hillbilly House)

*A Tribe Called Quest—  
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**HAPPY 5TH ANNIVERSARY SPIN. HAPPY LISTENING SPIN READERS.**

# underground

Column by Byron Coley

B.F. Trke, Burnin' Rain,  
Jad Fair, Organum,  
The Eels, Hudson-Styrene,  
Jazz Group Arkhangelsk,  
Atavistic Video,



Monica Des

**Destructo-punk Mike Hudson teams up with Styrene incarnators Paul Marotta and Jamie Kimek for the very weird *A Monster and the Devil*.**

**H**ey, nice day to you, too. Just received a ducky pile of wax from a fairly new Texas label called Rockadelic (PO Box 742801, Dallas, TX 75374-2801): five singles and two albums that make as good a pro-psych-style argument as I've heard. I guess the singles—one each by Otherside, Lithium X-mas, Burnin' Rain, Modern Whigs and Hash Palace—aren't really available anymore, but if you see any of them around I suggest you grab them. They are all quite good and the crazed, high-end fuzz-rush of Lithium X-mas is indescribably delicious. Luckily, both of the LPs are still in print, because they're mighty fine too. The eponymous **B.F. Trke** a bum is an archival effort, setting free tapes that have lain in the dark since they were recorded in '71. Trke were a tough Indiana trio who puffed out clouds of hard-psych stug (à la mid-period Blue Cheer) with occasional sidetrips into rural nether-regions. They may be the only band to have written a song directed at a bench. **Burnin' Rain's** *Vision*, the label's other longplayer, was recorded by a currently extant Texas band, but its psych roots run deep as well. Filled with 13 live and studio rambles through crunchy clumps of psych-blues-dinnage, it has the kind of late-night rage-putter that'll have you looking under the sofa for little balls of rolled tinfoil that may have escaped your prior attention. Good luck!

Quite a while back, this column ran an overview of **Jad Fair's** career with his band Half Japanese. Several people grouched that it was a stupid thing to do since most of the band's early work was about as common as a fourth nipple, and it was easy to empathize with their grief. Well, those grumblers out there should be willing to crack at least a little smile now, because Bad Alchemy Records (Postfach 84, D-8700 Würzburg 11, W. Germany) has just released a belly-flappin' double-LP by Jad called *Great Expectations*. And yeah, I realize that this isn't a Half Jap LP—proper, but in the course of its 76 (!!) tracks it reissues most of Jad's "Zombies of Mora-Tau" EP and his *Everyone Knew...* *But Me* LP, both of which are long-unavailable-but-essential portions of the Half Jap discography. Also included are a bevy of unheard-before selections, mostly in the short mode, mostly with Jad solo, all as sweetly stumbling as you could hope. And I realize that just looking at a set of

records with this many tunes on it seems as daunting as playing that new Cecil Taylor CD-box, but believe me, it goes by like a dream. A big damp dream, that takes place in a desert filled with candy rocks, where everybody shits pink pellets that angels come and take away in little baskets. Ahhhh.

Of course I don't really know what I'm talking about, but there's a virtual slew of bands working in a vein that I've kind of categorized as post-industrial. The phrase doesn't mean shit, but it kind of fits. What I'm talking about are bands who come out of a tradition (industrial) where the seeming idea was to create as much pure noise as possible. Doing this involved all sorts of weird approaches to sound-creation, and there are now a bunch of folks who are applying these (and related) approaches to works that aren't nearly as off-putting as their snarly and whining predecessors. The spiritual granddad of this experimental wing is probably the Colorado-based Mnemonists/Biota clan (more about them next ish), but the one I wanna mention here is **Organum**. They have a new album out called *Vacant Lights* (DOM America, PO Box 971, Olympia, WA 98507), which features some guests from Nurse With Wound and a sound that is fearfully approachable. The combo shuffles Lazy Susans full of sound and texture in a way that's musical without seeming too organized. Off in the distance there's a little bubbling kettle of intestines; over to your left there's a bell-hung reindeer

dancing on its hind legs. You get the idea. Or you *should*. This is a percussive instrumental argument in favor of hallucinogens.

Almost anyone can tell you that mid-70s Cleveland had itself a turdrockin' mom of an underground scene. Bands that strode the world like colossi were plentiful, ornery, and cool, even though they produced a pitifully small number of records to document the era. But every so often some of the long-lost evidence rises from the muck, and it usually blows the door off every hep heap on the street. Two such monsters have just appeared, courtesy of Tinnitus Records (PO Box M1824, Hoboken, NJ 07030), and if your brain requires a little bit of flossing I suspect that either of them will do the job effortlessly.

First up is *Having a Philosophical Discussion With the Electric Eels*. **The Eels** offered a brilliant combination of Beefheartian splunge blues guitar, wussy-beatnick vocals decanted like homosexual verse in some Roger Corman film, garagey bursts of 60s punk power and clarinet fit for a king's cracked diz. Previously heard only on two long-outta-print singles, the band rails through ten songs like an unattended wheelchair rolling down the aisle at a crowded theater. Bam! Bam! Bam!

A less spindly visceral thrill is afforded by **Hudson-Styrene's** *A Monster and the Devil* album. The Hudson, in this case, is Mike Hudson—lead singer for Cleveland destructo-punk immortals the Pagans. The Styrene part refers to the latest incarnation of Paul Marotta and Jamie Kimek's long-lived art-rock project (who've previously existed/recorded as Polystyrene Jass Band, Styrene Money Band, etc.). The merger between these two presumably irreconcilable styles is weird and boss. Hudson reads dark, funny stones about the trash side of the tracks (sometimes through levels of tape-guff) while the Styrenes act like they're the new tough guys on the Virgin Records roster (ca. '73). Together they make a wonderful and truly unique bone-thunk. For dancing it is not fit. For drinking it is splendid.

One of the best things I've heard lately is **Jazz Group Arkhangelsk's** *Pilgrims* double-LP (Leo import, available via NMDS, 500 Broadway, NYC 10012). As with many great records, it's a tough one to sum up in mere words. The band



Monica Des

**Former Half Jap Jad Fair issues a double LP, *Great Expectations*, that you may just be able to find.**



is based in far, far northern Russia (damn near the Arctic Circle) and their playing encompasses a batch of styles so wide it's nuts. They veer from near-straight sambas to the sort of drug-trance workouts I thought were only recorded in Swedish communes in the early 70s. All of this is pushed through a free jazz grid that has as many bristles as the strident, death-to-normalcy shit of the 60s, while somehow keeping the listener in touch with the fact that it's Russians playing the stuff. Folk themes appear like oily wisps of smoke, mingle with boo-clouds hovering overhead and everything comes swinging down like a fishnet falling outta heaven. Amazing grace.

Many years ago the Residents declared that "ignorance of your culture is not considered cool." As has so often been the case, they were absolutely right. There is now such an abundance of culture, however, that if you aren't always in the right place at the right time a lot of it is bound to shoot right past you. This is one of the reasons records are interesting: they capture a transient moment and make it possible for you to replicate it at your own damn whim. It's a nice option. And there are quite a few records that a hepster like yourself can choose from. But if you want visual kicks, ones that involve decent-looking videos of bands, about the only place to turn is **Atavistic Videos** (PO Box 578266, Chicago, IL 60657-8266). Begun a few years ago in northern Ohio by Kurt Kellison, Atavistic's first few tapes were pretty straight documentations of bands that passed in front of his camera. As his skills evolved, the tapes became more effect-laden (fairly essential for non-boredom when you're taking about bands that don't have any kind of stage props), tightly edited and (in the case of his work with his own band, IDF) carefully constructed. The back catalogue is still managably small, and the selection of artists is impressive: Sonic Youth, Big Black (although this tape is not as good as "The Last Blast" vid), Live Skull (ca. *Don't Get Any On You*), Savage Republic, Flaming Lips, Pussy Gaiore (including their astounding appearance on "The Uncle Floyd Show"), Killdozer, IDF and a gritty compilation of RRRRecords extremists called "Testament." All these are worth pestering your local video store about. I know my store finally broke down and bought them. Be persistent. Your culture's living heritage demands it.

Thanks for all the love beads, howabout some more nude pics? And please, **HOLD ONTO THOSE CASSETTES**. Thanks. PO Box 301, W Somerville, MA 02144. ☺

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# UNCLES

By Ben Metcalf and David Samuels

## LEE ATWATER'S ROCK'N'ROLL DIARY

**November 4**—Sitting in the Cabinet meeting today and couldn't get that Guns N' Roses dance out of my head, the one Axl does where his head stays still but his whole body moves. Tried it in the mirror when I got home, but it looked like I had something wrong with my neck. Tried it again for Bill Bennett later and he looked at me and then asked if there was something wrong with my neck. He looked really concerned.

**November 6**—Still worried about kidnap threats from Colombian drug lords. Have this recurring vision where a big gift-wrapped box arrives at the White House and Baba opens it and begins screaming "George Jr.! George Jr.!" I edge closer and ask what's in the box and why she's screaming her son's name. She points inside—a human leg, clad in Nantucket reds, no socks, and a topknot. I tell her not to worry because there are many Colombians at Yale, and that the leg could easily have come from one of them. This cheers her up, but only a little bit. The next day she gets George Jr.'s severed head in the mail. Now I'm really stumped.

**November 9**—Had the switchboard put through a call to Tom Petty. Operator got him on the line, but it went dead. Had the operator put the call through again, but no one was home.

**November 12**—I have this recurring Natalie Merchant fantasy. I'm sitting at the Palms eating a steak and a woman in a peasant skirt, big floppy blouse and no makeup comes

over to my table, grabs the steak and hurls it to the floor. "Don't you know meat is murder?" she asks. I'm annoyed but also intrigued, and I wave off the goons who have begun to wrestle the woman to the floor. I hold out my hand. "Lee Atwater, Republican National Committee." She looks at me for a minute, long and hard. "What did you say your name was?" she asks. "Lee Atwater" I respond, smiling. She looks at me again. "I hate you! I hate you! I hate you, and I hate everything you stand for!" I ask her if she'd like to discuss this over drinks. At this, she becomes completely hysterical. No matter what I say, she keeps screaming and yelling about how much she hates me. I wave to the goons, and they wrestle her to the ground and throw her out on the sidewalk. No matter how many times I go over this scene in my mind, the end is always the

**November 14**—Bill Bennett came to visit my office today. Traded him Sticky Fingers for the new Stones album. The new Stones album is terrible.

**November 16**—Latest polls show only 20 percent of Afro-Americans consider voting Republican. Of those, 50 percent consider it a fundamental betrayal of their most basic values, 25 percent consider it the moral equivalent of suicide and 24 percent consider it worse than suicide. Of the one percent who actually do vote Republican, 20 percent think Abraham Lincoln is still President, 30 percent think Jesse Jackson is both a Republican and the President and 50 percent like Ben E. King and would vote

whichever way he tells them to. Realistically, it's that 50 percent that we have to work with.

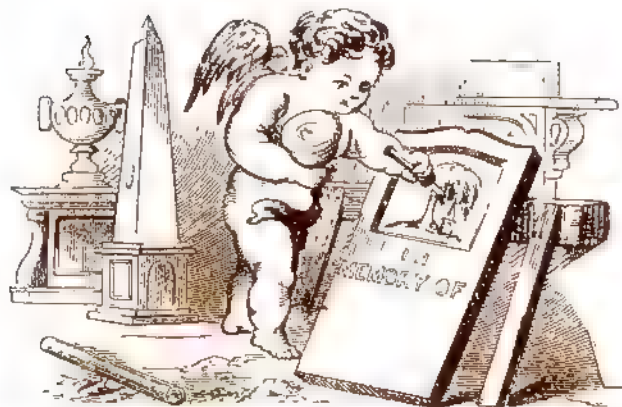
**November 17**—Sat in my office alone all day. Had the switchboard put through a call to Joe Cocker. Got him on the line, but he said he had to check on something and would call me right back. Maybe he'll call tomorrow.

**November 19**—Newspapers keep complaining that we're sending the Russians mixed signals on perestroika and should be doing more. I'm sick and tired of this crap. Think of everything we've sent them lately—Billy Joel, Anthrax, Jon Bon Jovi. I'd give anything to see Jon Bon Jovi live.

**November 21**—Bill Bennett came over again. Traded my copy of *Electric Ladyland* for the new BoDeans album. It's a pretty good album.

**November 24**—Have left 25 messages for Roland Gift, but he won't return my calls. I clearly identified myself every time—"This is Lee Atwater, Chairman of the Republican National Committee"—and left detailed information about myself that only I would know. He hasn't called me once. Mentioned this to Bennett, and he laughed and said that Roland Gift returns everyone's calls.

**November 27**—Called 12 more times, but still haven't heard from Roland Gift. Asked George about a possible pardon for James Brown. He said no.



## Beyond the Grave

Join us here each month as rock 'n' roll's greatest performers address the topics that occupy them beyond the grave. This month's message is from the legendary Roy Orbison, who died last year of a heart attack.

We have many interesting things to think about in heaven, but none of them are as dear to my heart as my thoughts about trees. Millions of them die every year. Also, the leaves on many trees turn a remarkable variety of colors in the fall or late fall season. Also, it is not true that my hair was a wig, or that I wore a wig and those glasses because I was an albino or drunk.



# S I F I E D S

## Jamies Corner



Hi! I'm Jamie. This month I want to send a message to David Bowie. David, I think you are the cutest. I like all of your records, including the Tin Drum one you did with Soupy Sales' midget children.

My father bought me the CD of your latest album for my birthday, the one with all your old songs on it. I liked it a lot and think you should do more records like it in the future. I know this might cause a problem with the little people in the Drum group, so here's what you should do: first, take those suits you wear away from everyone in the band. If they ask why you want them, say that they are filthy and have to go to the cleaners. Then take them outside and throw them in the trash.

If anyone asks you what happened to the suits, say that they were so filthy it will take at least a month to get them cleaned. That will give you enough time to call Soupy Sales

and ask him when the last time he saw his children was and wouldn't it be nice to see them again. When the Sales family is together, send them a letter telling them that they've won a free trip to Russia with the tickets inside. Don't tell them that the letter was from you. They will be glad to take a vacation together, and Russia is a fascinating land of changes that the whole family would enjoy. I think a trip like that would be nice for them, and it would get those troublesome kids out of your hair. Once you are alone and the Sales family is thousands of miles away, you will have plenty of time to sing all the songs from "Ziggy Stardust" and "Let's Dance" and put them out on an album that everyone would like.

Love,  
Jamie

*Parents who object to explicit language and adult subject matter should bear in mind that, because of the fable's historical emphasis on instruction, all children have the right to read this or to have it explained in detail if they cannot read yet themselves.*

### Rock & Roll Fable

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a boy named Rod Stewart who had a voice so unpleasant to the ear that he was shunned by his entire village. Teachers refused to call on him in the classroom, and the other children steered clear of him at recess, laughing and yelling from afar in beautiful, clear voices. Even his own parents refused to speak to him, for fear of a response.

In all the world, Rod had but one friend, a man of few words and strange habits who lived nearby and considered the lad's voice the most beautiful he had ever heard. The two friends would sit together for hours on the moors surrounding the village, laughing and discussing important issues related to life in the highlands. Often the man would ask Rod to sing for him as they danced through the heather, and his constant encouragement did wonders for the boy's crippled self-esteem. Within three short years of their first meeting, Rod had attained the self-confidence required to ask the man what he did for a living. The man explained that he was the village idiot.

Soon, it was time for Rod to make his way in the world. The villagers found him a spot on the local semi-pro soccer team, reasoning that an athletic field would be a dangerous place for a spindly-framed and poorly balanced boy. Just two minutes into the first game of the season, Rod was blind-sided by a halfback from the opposing team named Sheena Easton. Both his legs were broken, and his face was bruised, to the cheers of the spectators.

Though Rod's athletic career was over, another opportunity lay just

around the corner. The day after the game, a man came to call, saying that he had been at the game and had heard the boy scream when his legs gave. The man said he worked for a huge record company and was convinced that he could make Rod a star. Rod Stewart quickly signed the contract and then realized as the ink was drying that the man was none other than his old friend, the village idiot.

Within a year, Rod had become a guilt-ridden, image-conscious megastar, compensating for his shameful voice, hideous looks and poor self-esteem by marrying the dumpy ex-wife of a minor Beatle. But there was trouble on the horizon. Minutes after he took the stage in Madison Square Garden to sing "Maggie May" to a cheering throng of teenaged girls from Queens, he doubled over with severe abdominal cramps and collapsed on stage. He was taken immediately to Lennox Hill Hospital, where doctors pumped his stomach and discovered four partially digested boxes of Twinkies, five pairs of green Converse All-Star Hightops, a Mr. Coffee coffee machine, two Missouri license plates and a live chihuahua.

After a long and slow period of recovery, Rod Stewart returned to the world of rock 'n' roll, spiked his hair, and had a minor hit in the early 1980's with the song "Young Turks."

#### MORAL

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advice I possibly could offer. To go along with HIV as the cause of AIDS, based on my experience with retroviruses, would have been irresponsible.

Also, I believe in scientific honesty. I think in the long run, the truth does catch up with science. Sometime. It may take years, but it will someday catch up with them. I mean, it would look ridiculous if all of us would have made this mistake, and 10 years later people would laugh at us, saying, "Look at those old fools. They all believed viruses cause AIDS or viruses cause cancer, when they didn't." So, having spent 25 years on it already, I know what I'm talking about, and I don't want to be laughed at in 25 years. So that's an ego element, you might say.

**But there are those who have studied retroviruses as long as you have who disagree with you. How do you interpret that?**

That is for me hard to analyze. It's part of the human mind that is hard to fathom for me, since there is no scientific proof for the HIV-AIDS hypothesis. I don't know how people make up their minds, how they fall in love, how they choose a religion and how they become nationalistic. Those are beyond rational, beyond the reach of reason. I think the human mind often makes decisions that are totally irrational.

By contrast, a scientist has to be prepared to question everything, all the time. Exactly as Albert Einstein said, "The important thing is not to stop questioning." And as I learned more than ever before in this debate, even some of the most illustrious scientists are not prepared to do that. They have grown up with a system that they don't want to question anymore. And, in particular, if they have succeeded in it

## "Well if I were so homophobic, why would I care how they die?"

and have made a career in it

Mathilde Krim once said to us, "We cannot prove that HIV causes AIDS, and Dr. Duesberg cannot prove that it doesn't." Do you have any study in mind, a lab study, a controlled study, that could prove your theory that HIV is not the cause of AIDS?

The last paragraph of my *Proceedings* paper is entirely dedicated to answering this question. I have made several very specific proposals on how to do this. I said we need controlled epidemiological studies—for example, in hemophiliacs or in babies. We have to compare antibody-positives to otherwise totally comparable risk groups without the antibody. This would tell us whether the presence of the antibody or the virus contribute to the diseases. If so, then we have an epidemiological argument for HIV. If not, we have nothing.

Biochemically, I answered them: I think I cannot see any experiment worth doing for me in view of what I know about retroviruses and what has already been published about HIV in AIDS, namely that it isn't active, that it's only found in one out of every thousand cells that are lost during AIDS. It would have to be in every one of them in order for me to

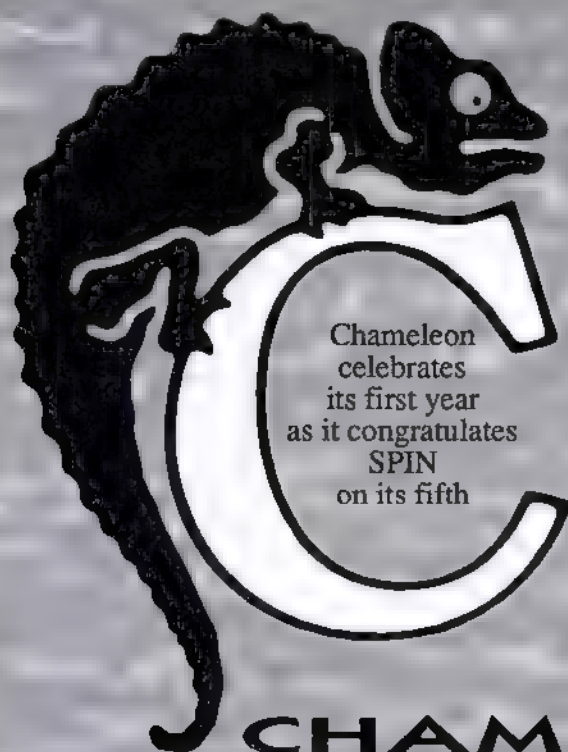
make it a worthwhile experiment. And the disease would have to appear in step with virus replication, rather than 10 years later, on the average.

So none of these arguments give me even a slightly plausible point of departure on which to base an experiment. I would consider it, from what I know about HIV and AIDS now, a complete waste of time to do even one experiment with HIV. But the epidemiology could benefit from a controlled study. That not one of them has ever been done by all these epidemiologists and HIV researchers is interesting.

**How has Gallo's reaction to you been? Has it changed at all?**

It was always very emotional. Once we had a debate, and he got so excited he got off the elevator on the wrong floor, in his own building. He said I was totally off the mark, that he couldn't talk to me about it any more. Then he avoided me because he said he couldn't talk about HIV with me without shrieking. The latest is, he called me a few days ago without mentioning any science. I think he wants to preserve our personal relationship, and just not mention the scientific controversy. That of course is very difficult at this point.

On several occasions, he's canceled out on meetings because I was invited. There was one meeting held in Greece last year with the whole retrovirus club. I looked at the program, and it didn't have my name on it. One of the organizers promised me money if I would go to Greece, provided I didn't speak or show up at the discussions. I said I was busy anyway, but I was flattered by their reactions to me—that my arguments made such a strong impression they were buying me a vacation in Greece. ☐



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6	Kylie Minogue	Enjoy Yourself
7	Earth, Wind And Fire	Heritage
8	The Cramps	Stay Sick
9	Michael Penn	March
10	Thin White Rope	Sack Full Of Silver
11	Hanoi Rocks	Back To Mystery City
12	Hanoi Rocks	Bangkok Shocks, Saigon Shakes, Hanoi Rocks
13	Hanoi Rocks	Self Destruction Blues

## HEAVY ROTATION

1	The Mission UK	Carved In Sand
2	Sinead O'Connor	I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got
3	ABC	UP
4	Lil Louis And The World	From The Mind Of Lil Louis
5	Cowboy Junkies	The Caution Horses
6	The Cramps	Stay Sick

## COLLEGE RADIO TOP 30

1	Ministry	The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste
2	Jesus And Mary Chain	Automatic
3	Kate Bush	The Sensual World
4	Creatures	Boomerang
5	Eleventh Dream Day	Beet
6	Psychedelic Furs	Book Of Days
7	Nine Inch Nails	Pretty Hate Machine
8	Ian McCulloch	Candleland
9	Wonder Stuff	Hup
10	Smithereens	11
11	Primitives	Pure
12	Peter Murphy	Deep
13	Skinny Puppy	Rabies
14	Red Lorry Yellow Lorry	Blow
15	Dramarama	Stuck In Wonderland
16	Laurie Anderson	Strange Angels
17	Blake Babies	Earwig
18	Michelle Shocked	Captain Swing
19	Mekons	Rock 'N' Roll
20	Lenny Kravitz	Let Love Rule
21	Mudhoney	Mudhoney
22	Screaming Blue Messiahs	Totally Religious
23	Opal	Early Recordings
24	Feedtime	Suction
25	Mighty Lemon Drops	Laughter
26	Michael Penn	March
27	Red Hot Chili Peppers	Mother's Milk
28	Camper Van Beethoven	Key Lime Pie
29	Galaxie 500	On Fire
30	Morrissey	Ouija Board, Ouija Board ("5")



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## LEAVING THE BAND

I made a lot of changes in my life in the last six months: I left my wife, I left my girlfriend, and I left the band. It was hard, but I had to do it. I had to become myself and not a puppet.

I was sick and tired of the little-boy look—the bowl haircut and the motorcycle jacket. Four middle-aged men trying to be teenage juvenile delinquents. I was just getting sick of playing in a revival act.

No one in the group was really growing up but me, which is pretty weird because there was no one in that group more self-destructive. I was a big trouble-maker in the group. I put them through a lot of pain.

What made me feel like a phony was standing there in a leather jacket and torn jeans—like I used to dress when I thought I was a worthless piece of shit. Then it was a reflection of my hostility and self-hate. Then, all of a sudden, I started feeling good about myself. I started feeling elegant and worthwhile. I wanted to reflect that, but there was no way to do it in the Ramones because those guys were a bunch of bums. Joey never takes a shower. He stunk.

I knew I was leaving in that last California tour. I think they're happy, because the Ramones are always happy when someone leaves. It adds new life to the group, and then they can go round saying "we're faster."

I couldn't take the van anymore. I was sitting at the back looking out the window. No one ever talked to me. Johnny and Joey didn't talk for years. There was a time when we had a bus that had four separate compartments. John would sit in one with his girlfriend. Mark would sit there with his. Joey would sit there with Linda, and I'd sit in another one. And if we'd see each other, it would get real ugly. We couldn't even walk out of the bus together. We couldn't even get our keys to the hotel room together. We couldn't look at each other.

A couple of weeks after I left the Ramones, I started panicking. I was thinking about going back. I started answering the phone, and the management were offering me a fortune to do a tour with them. I was broke, and I was thinking the money would be good, and I realized that I couldn't do it. No matter what happens, I can't go back with those guys. It'll kill me. It was getting close. Coming home from San Francisco after the Brain Drain Tour, I was sitting in the back of the plane, and who comes strolling down the aisle but one of the biggest heroin dealers in America—a guy from my past. He was just in from Bangkok with a load of pure China White and he sits down in the seat behind me. He'd seen the Ramones on the plane, and he knew I was there. I was gritting my teeth, and he says, "you look kinda tight Dee Dee. Wanna valium?" I knew a valium would make me 10 times more depressed. Valiums always led me to do everything else. Then about 20 minutes later, he curls up next to me and pulls out this test tube of pure heroin and takes a snort. He says "help yourself"—I got upset and said "no." Somehow he got my number, and he called me that night at 4:00 am and said "listen—I wanna apologize." On the plane he had this huge gold skull covered in rubies and diamonds around his neck. He said, "I'd like to meet you tomorrow and give you this gold skull as a token of our friendship." So I said, "Alright, come by." Fucking guy never showed up. I waited there for an hour for him. That's how these dealers are. They always let you down. I thought I could have sold it

and bought some guitars and clothes and a present for my girlfriend Laura. But he never showed up.

The thing that pisses me off now is the Ramones won't give me any money that is owed to me unless I sign this paper giving up the name Dee Dee Ramone. I was Dee Dee Ramone in '67, '68, and I thought of the name Ramones—it's my name—and I think there's enough room in this world for a Ramones and a Dee Dee Ramone.



## RAP

For a while, I went under the name of Dee Dee King. That was for Rap. I don't like Rap much anymore. I'm sick of it. It's just become a parody of itself. When I seen my idols like Doug E. Fresh sing stupid love raps, or LL doing "2 Different Worlds" with his girlfriend on it, I cringed and said I didn't want to be associated with this.

## FUTURE RAMONES

I think Johnny should play with Jello Biafra and make a real intense punk rock band. They'd be perfect and he really likes him. Joey could get a great band together. I think he has a great voice live, but in the studio it doesn't come across. Everybody says that to me, they say he's singing off-key on records. Mark is a total pro: he could play with anybody. The Ramones stay together because they're selling themselves short. They're greedy. Everybody lives so cheap and puts it in the bank. Everybody in that group has a lot of money, and they don't need to do this. I don't know what's gonna happen to them, but I think there gonna do just fine.

A lot of the fans don't like it that I left the band. They're upset. It used to bother me, but now I feel like it's made me that much more determined. I know I'm gonna be alright, I'm starting to play in two weeks. I got a great band, great material. I got the luxury of choosing very carefully what I want to put out, because I got more than enough songs.

I guess everyone should come see me play, then we'll know if I have to go back to playing bass with the Ramones—go back begging on my hands and knees and ask them to give me more punishment. ☹



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nun again."

"Are you obsessive about everything?"

"Oh yeah, I am very, very, very obsessive, and I wish to God I wasn't. I'm obsessive by nature, I suppose, and I worry. I worry too much."

"What are you worried about now?"

"Oh, nothing now. But anything. You know the Lord God could stand in front of me and tell me that everything's fine and I'd worry why he felt the need to come and tell me that, you know what I mean?"

A group of black men sat playing rummy at a card table off to the side of the barber shop. In one of the two chairs a barber was reading a newspaper. The other chair was empty, and a young, skinnny barber with a pencil moustache beckoned Sinead to sit, even though, by the look on his face, he didn't have a clue as to what to cut. There just wasn't any hair except for two millimeters of stubble.

"Can you put tram lines on the side?"

The barber looked over at his friends and rolled his eyes wide. Then to Sinead he just kind of nodded and she climbed into the big barber's chair, her Doc Martens not even coming close to the footrest. The barber looked at his pals playing cards, and they all broke into wide grins that threatened to break into hysterical laughter. But the barber cut it off before they exploded and started talking in whispers with Sinead to try to figure out just what the hell she meant by "tram lines." After a couple of minutes in conference he turned on the electric clippers, and she sat back in the chair, chewing her gum and swinging her feet back and forth. She looked about five years old.

The tramlines took a minute and forty seconds to clip. We paid the guy and thanked him, smiled at the

card players and left as the nervous laughter was coming.

Sinead checked herself out in a store window.

"Brilliant!" She said of his work, then forgot about it.

**S**inead had told me that Barbra Streisand was her biggest influence, and I didn't really believe her until I popped a New York Dolls tape in the boom box and she asked who, it was. I played her Patti

## People don't become rock stars by accident. Sinead preferred a starring role in the melodrama of her life.

Smith's *Piss Factory* and Richard Hell's *Blank Generation* and a few others, and they all got the same reaction. She said she liked them, but she was being nice. Humoring me until she could go back to listening to rap.

But watching her up there in Harlem reminded me of why rock'n'roll used to be dangerous and Sinead still is. It's not only that she is different, but she celebrates the joy of being different. Of being herself. Like Elvis digging his blue suede shoes. And in an age of "Conform or die," Sinead is a revolutionary. But rock'n'rollers were all once revolutionaries by the fact that they said it was okay to be weird. To be different, and celebrate it.

I was doing a lousy job, but trying to explain it to her anyway.

"Once upon a time, rock'n'roll used to be dangerous, you know, about Jim Morrison singing about killing his father and fucking his mother instead of..."

"While I can understand that, I can't possibly relate to it because I'm 22 and that all happened when I was you know, in nappies."

"Don't rub it in."

"I can't help it, there's a certain perverse pleasure..."

"Yeah, some day you'll be a dinosaur too."

"We'll see..."

God, she is such a smartass, it's impossible not to be in love with her.

But as we were hanging out together, I started getting annoyed with something. She was always looking at me like I was the weirdo. Like I was the Martian. We'd walk down the street and everyone would turn and stare at her, Sinead completely oblivious, and then we'd be talking, and from out of the corner of her eye, I'd catch this look like, "Shit, this guy is one fucked-up sonofabitch." But it wasn't me, Sinead really is one of those people you expect to see popping up in the transporter room of the *Starship Enterprise*. Just beaming right in because Scotty fucked up during an ion storm, again. She's an alien. And she had the fucking audacity to keep looking at me like I was the mutant here. We couldn't have been from more different worlds if we were born galaxies apart.

**T**he next day was Sunday, and I was embarrassed.

"And what's with you this morning? Some girl

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tell you what you didn't want to hear?"

"No, nothing like that, uh..."

"Then what is it?"

"I'm not telling you, you'll start making fun of me."

"Oh you poor sensitive thing... out with it."

"It's Sunday, I go to church."

"Praying for your immortal soul, eh? Well, I think it's too late for that... Come on, you don't really."

"Yeah, I do."

"Why?"

"I guess I'm grateful, I like the pageantry. I like the smell... I like it when the priest says, 'Let us praise the mysteries of faith.' I think it's very sexy. I think going to church is like saying 'Yes.'"

We sat in the back of the 9:30 mass at St. Anthony of Padua's Catholic Church on Houston and Sullivan, while Sinead made faces at everything the priest said that she disagreed with. Which was a lot. But when it came time for communion she was right up there. When she returned from the altar I said, "Sinead, man, you can't go to communion unless you've been to confession recently, I think."

"Oh, and when was the last time you went to confession?"

"Ah... ah... 23 years ago... But you don't see me up there getting communion."

"Well, some of us haven't committed as many sins as you."

"Yeah, I know, I know. I'm a slag and a weasel."

**W**hen she had to catch a plane back to London I rode out with her to the airport. It was one of those real gray New York winter mornings when the world looks its bleakest. One of those mornings when you stare out at the row houses in Queens and wonder what's the use of going on. And to top it off, the car radio was carrying a live broadcast outside the prison in Stark, Florida, where any minute, mass murderer Ted Bundy was about to fry in the electric chair. No, this wasn't America at its finest moment. The radio had a live feed on location, so you could hear the crowd of spectators outside the prison cheering for the chair. Delighting in Ted's imminent execution. And Sinead was horrified. Absolutely mortified by human beings cheering for another's death. We rode in silence until the announcer came back with word that Bundy was no more.

"It's quite frightening. America always makes me feel like I'm a million miles away from everywhere. I mean, I come from a very small town, so America, especially New York, is too impersonal, too cold—physically and mentally. It's quite frightening for somebody who knows nothing about it and who doesn't live here. It's the one place I've ever been where I have actually been afraid walking down the road. And fucking stupid bastards drive up to me in their car and go 'Scum!' because of the way I look. And I could just fucking kill them."

"You don't get that in England?"

"No."

"You don't get that in Ireland?"

"No, you get stupid people staring at you as if you have five heads or something, but I never get that treatment in England or Ireland. And in America I would never expect something like that to happen, because I think, 'Oh, there's a fucking billion people in America they must be used to everything,' you know? That's why I couldn't believe it was so racist or that it is so fucking—what's the word for it—conservative. I just can't believe it. People have

literally walked up to me on the street and pulled up behind me in their cars and stared. Like the first fucking thing your mother teaches you when you're a baby is not to stare, do you know what I mean, and they stare at you like you're a fucking dragon or something. And start yelling insults at you for no reason. It's just staggering. I can't understand it. And they really look stupid. Oh god, if I looked like they do, I'd never come out of the house."

The cab pulled into Pan Am, I paid the driver and we stood on line at the ticket counter.

"So let me see your passport picture?"

"Never."

"Aw, you're no fun."

She was self-conscious of the picture of herself when she still had hair and clutched the passport away from me. As if seeing her the way she looked before would invalidate the person she had become. Or maybe she was afraid that people would like Sinead with hair more than the stubble version. So I didn't press it. She checked in and we walked to her gate.

"Gee, I'm really going to miss you."

Sinead blushed.

"You don't think the terrorists left any bombs on this one," she nodded towards the plane.

"No, I think they just get you coming in from Europe, not leaving the States."

But she wasn't reassured. And then everyone was boarding, and we were at the entrance to the glass hallway, the ramp to the plane, and I could go no further.

"See ya."

She walked down the hallway and boarded the plane, and I felt like someone had stabbed my stomach with a pitchfork and started turning it round, twisting up my guts. I knew that no matter how close I

got, I would still be a million miles away. Whatever we were doing hanging out together wasn't about reality. It wasn't about connecting. People don't become rock stars by accident. Sinead preferred a starring role in the melodrama of her life. And it was very few who got let inside to see what movie was playing. Everyone else was a bit player to keep her distracted from herself. Her life was dictated by how well this week's obsession was going, about trying not to think too much about what had happened so fast, for fear that it would all be gone tomorrow. Until a few months ago, her life had been one constant battle—22 years at war to break out, doing it all alone. Now that the dream had come true, she was shell-shocked, without a clue as to what to do during peacetime.

And as far as she was concerned, I was still in the enemy camp, for she knew that as a writer I would someday have to write it all down.

I went to the newsstand and picked up a copy of SPIN with the 25 best albums of all time, grabbed a cab back to Manhattan and read Christian Logan Wright's assessment of Sinead: "... Sinead's wailing, serenading, bellowing and swooning arrives like two dozen roses in the dead of winter. She's at once tentative and cocksure, glamorous and severe, a kid and a mother. If Colette had recorded pop songs, she might have sounded like Sinead...."

"Ya hear, they just fried Bundy!" The cab driver growled over his shoulder.

"Jesus, I was trying to have an intimate fucking moment here... Yeah, it's no wonder she didn't stay..."

"What?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all."

The cabby was silent for the rest of the way in. And all the way in, the gray just got grayer.



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I wasn't the same Sinead I'd seen a year before who met me out in front of her modest two-story suburban home in Golders Green, on the outskirts of London, in January. She still looked great, stubble and all, but there was something else going on. I didn't notice it at first, but as she gave me the nickel tour of the house and tucked her son Jake into bed underneath his gold record for helping to make *The Lion and the Cobra* a hit, it finally dawned on me that Sinead was happy.

Her best friend from Dublin, Kera, was on the couch watching TV. Sinead sat on the floor bent over her portable CD player alternating between rap, Sex Pistols and Van Morrison, looking like a little girl rehashing her 45 collection. The scene was more reminiscent of a lazy weekday night in the girls' dorm than the home of the woman with the number-one single in Britain. "No one compares 2 U," a Prince cover from her new LP. *I Don't Want What I Haven't Got* had just hit number three, on the way to number one. Beside her, lying on the floor to remind her that she wasn't just another young mother and newwed, was a copy of the *New Musical Express* with Sinead's picture on the front and back covers.

"I was 20 when I put my first album out, and 15 when I wrote a lot of the songs that are on it, and I was very, very fucked-up and very, very unhappy. And I remained so until about six months ago, when I started to write again."

"I worked really hard on the new album. I didn't particularly work hard on the last one, and I didn't really give a shit about it."

Kera made a round of Irish coffee, and as they were drained, she and Sinead started laughing at all they've been through together. Kera was remembering the time in grammar school when Sinead was writing her name on her new book bag, but only got as far as S-I-N,

when the bell rang. Kera grabbed the book bag and filled in the rest so it read, "I LOVE SIN!" The next day, Sinead's mother (whom Kera had never met) arrived at school and bawled Kera out in front of the world.

The two of them were in hysterics, remembering the war of adolescence, when Sinead's husband, John Reynolds, arrived home from a hard day at the studio. A tall, good-looking, friendly guy, it wasn't hard to see why Sinead married him. He looks like the kind of guy you want to go knock back a few with at the pub, and as he walked into the living room, he resembled Ricky Ricardo coming home and catching Lucy and Ethel Mertz up to their old tricks again.

Sinead grabbed the tape John had spent the day mixing, popped it into the box and fiddled with the equalizer. She sat staring into her knees, listening to the music.

"I can never understand why people thought I was aggressive and it really hurt me to think that people thought I was aggressive. I never realized that if I shave my head people would think it's aggressive. Because I know myself inside me, I know I'm not aggressive. The main thing for me is to take responsibility for myself and that's the lesson I need to learn in my life."

"I think if you are prepared to go around and express an opinion very vociferously about something, you should also be prepared to say that you were wrong and you should always be prepared to apologize if you were wrong."

"I am horrified by what I said about the IRA. I don't believe in violence. I said that I felt that it was practically alright for people to go around blowing people up—and that horrifies me that I said that. I didn't even think about what I said."

"And I was wrong. I was living my life as a

disaster. I was not being myself. I have always lived my life through whatever boyfriend I had or whatever friend I had. I had never been me. And I found that I'd been lying, that I had been living a lie."

"I was being very narrow-minded, and I still would be very direct and I would say something was shit or something was great or whatever, but at the same time, I would hope that now I would be a bit more willing to understand another person's point of view, and not be so judgmental. I was very judgmental. I didn't want to see another person's point of view. It didn't exist as far as I was concerned. I was right. And that's bullshit. That's not right. It's not fair. Everyone is the same. All people are exactly the same and you should put yourself into another person's shoes and try to see their point of view. Which is not something that I was being encouraged to do. I had to take responsibility myself."

"John made me much more settled, where before I felt very isolated and very lonesome. I'd always felt very insecure and was always running around, going out with this, that and the other bloke, because I was always looking for something and I didn't know what it was I was looking for. And then when I got married, my whole life became very settled with Jake and John. I had never been particularly happy."

It was nice to see her find some peace, but as I was saying goodbye, the old Sinead resurfaced. The sore throat she was suffering had grown from an inconvenience to an obsession.

"You don't think it's throat cancer?"

"No, Sinead. It's not throat cancer. Your voice is going to be fine. You're going to sell a million records and everything is going to be okay for a while, okay?"

"Okay."

Only this time, she looked like she actually believed that she might be entitled to some serenity too. Well, only half-believed it, but that was a lot more than I'd ever seen from her.

And it left me feeling there was a chance for everyone else. I mean, if Sinead could get there, then

The phone would ring.

"Hello?"

"Where's my Elvis Lamp?"

"This time I really have it, I'm gonna send it tomorrow, I swear..."

"You lying bastard. So are you going to read me the rubbish you've been writing about me?"

"Of course I am, but it's a bit long. You know what I should do? I should fax it to you, now doesn't that sound like a better idea?"

"So when are you going to fax it to me?"

"Tomorrow, that's good for me. Yeah, tomorrow."

"Just like you're sending me my Elvis lamp. God you're such a shit..."

"You call me that once more and I won't tell everyone how great your new album is!"

"Do you really like it?"

"It's really wonderful, you should be very happy."

"I am, it's just that I haven't had anything out for such a long time. And I've been running around doing all this press and I can't quit smoking..."

"Sinead, it's a great album."

"Thank you."

"I'll talk to you tomorrow?"

"Okay, tomorrow."

"See you later?"

"Byyyyyyye."





all members have their roles within Midnight Oil. When I visited The Office, Rotsey was overseeing the choosing of photos for publicity and conversing with notoriously tough, long-time manager Gary Morris, while Moginie scrutinized the sound of a test pressing of the single "Blue Sky Mine." Hillman, or Bones as he is nick-named, maintains the office's jovial balance.

It's a balance of personalities and roles that's been some 13 years in the making, and that's come not without its particular traumas. "There have been a couple of times," explains Hirst, "where although to outsiders the band seemed rock solid, we went through some very fragile periods. Often they were related to what Pete was doing outside the band."

Garrett's extra-curricular activities have included his lunge for political office, his seat on Constitutional Commissions exploring the boundaries of Individual and Democratic Rights and, more recently, his appointment as president of the Australian Conservation Foundation, a political lobby concerned primarily with environmental issues. Indeed, he may well be one of the most recognizable people in Australia and his profile is increasing globally.

"Well, they haven't chucked me out yet," Garrett

**"We realized that to get to people, sometimes it's better to whisper. When we started to play quietly people would move up the front to hear. We learned a bit of seduction."**

**—Jim Moginie**

laughs, when asked how the band is working around this new, time-consuming position. "I think there's an elastic side to Midnight Oil, which has allowed the band to make music that hasn't become stale and flabby and ego-centric and it's partly been because everybody's got a little bit of room to do what they have to do."

"The way the band operated is such that we've always let people in the band do what they do best," adds Hirst. "Pete's best avenue is communication he's an incredibly charismatic performer in public speaking and organizing issues and people."

In person, Garrett is friendly, yet always conscious of his position. He makes one feel welcome, yet maintains a distance. A skilled media operator, he'll never give away more than he wants, and won't be provoked. He remembers people's names and uses them liberally—a fail-safe public relations technique. All the while, however, he remains passionate and convincing.

"I don't make any bones about the fact that (a) I'm an idealist, and (b) I'm an egalitarian," he says. "Even if those values don't find their way all that much in the world, you know, I think they're good values. They make you feel good, but more importantly, I think they can work, and I think they are at least part of the answer to survival. So consequently a lot of stuff I've been involved in and what the O has done has

reflected that."

"It's a travelogue album, dealing, at least in some part, with where we think things are at, and where we're at with things," says Peter Garrett about *Blue Sky Mining*. "And that really came about as a result of touring heavily with *Diesel And Dust* and then coming back home to Australia and sitting here for a while and looking at it all from this perspective."

*Diesel And Dust* and *Blue Sky Mining* were born of two completely different environments—the former in the western desert of inland Australia, with songs literally written around the campfire, and the latter in the Holiday Inns of America, where the band spent most of 1988, criss-crossing the country three times—and it shows. The band's subject matter has shifted, and the sounds are more complex and troubled on *Blue Sky Mining*, capturing the bustling environments that inspired them.

"There's one song in particular, 'Bedlam Bridge,' which I began writing in Rochester, New York," says Hirst. "We came out of a hotel and wanted to walk down to this hypermart about a mile and a half down the road. And I noticed there weren't any footpaths, no provision for pedestrians at all, total automobile society. I was walking down there and I got stopped by a police car and questioned. I said 'in our country we still use our legs occasionally.' Sydney might be becoming a suburb of Los Angeles, but we're not there quite yet. He understood who I was and had a laugh."

"We always do some of our best shows in New York, because there's a certain powerful feeling you get from the place. But there's also the B side of America. You can only get more and more furious about the callous attitude of [then] Mayor Koch who emptied the lunatic asylums around New York City and then stated that you had to be mad to live without

shelter on the streets of New York. In the eight or nine years since then you're constantly reminded of that Bombay-on-the-Hudson thing, the number of people who live out-of-doors on the streets of New York."

The single "Blue Sky Mine," meanwhile, has its origins in Australian fact, but has foreign parallels. "The actual lyric was inspired by a book called *Blue Murder* by Ben Hills, which is about a blue asbestos mine started in 1943 in Wittenoom, Western Australia," Hirst explains.

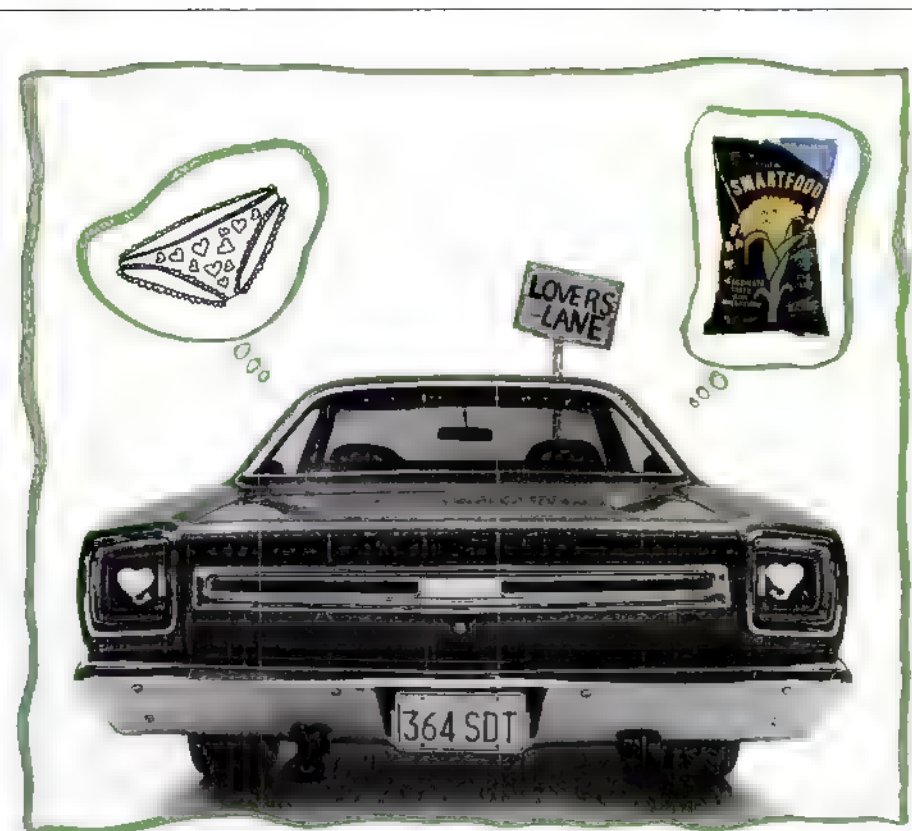
"The only reason it hasn't risen to the prominence of an industrial and chemical disaster of the nature of Bhopal is that the company is settling out of court."

"We don't mind being an issues band," Peter Garrett says, getting excited. "We think there needs to be issues in life and we've always run really strongly on them and we're happy to run strong on this one (the environment) and if we've got company, great. You know we would have made the record anyway, even if everybody had suddenly decided that they wanted to turn light green."

When it's suggested that cynics could easily attack *Blue Sky Mining* as an attempt to broach every concern, excluding AIDS, affecting mankind, and that the band is spreading itself thin, Garrett isn't moved.

"Well mate, this is where we live, you know, what can I say?," he asks, and then pauses. "We don't make music to deal with problems that cynics might have with a band that actually writes about things that they feel or that they care about."

"Cynicism is somebody else's problem—somebody else's sickness, if you like. I think that this is the kind of band whose preoccupations have always been radically different from the preoccupations of most popular performers."



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# My Earliest Memories of Spin

By Glenn O'Brien

One night at Tramps, a New York City rhythm and blues bar run by Irishmen right off the boat, Elliott Murphy, the singer-songwriter told me that he had met this guy named Bob Guccione, Jr., a nice fellow who was starting up a new music magazine. He said I should give him a call and the next day I did.

I arrived at the office of the just conceived, gestating magazine and met the managing editor and only staff member Gregg Weatherby. Weatherby is a Lone Star Cafe kind of guy whose cowboy boots cost ten times more than the rest of his costume and whose idea of a rock star is Mickey Gilley. A perfect managing editor for a rock magazine, I figured. I mean would you entrust your galleys to a Mötley Crüe fan? Anyway we talk for a while and I find out that the magazine is called SPIN. Not Bad Surprised that nobody used it before. I start to figure that this guy Weatherby is from someplace like Durango, Vermont, or Wichita, Maine, or El Paso, New Hampshire.

Then this guy bops into the room wearing an Air Force jumpsuit and one of those silver jackets that says Porsche on it. (Later I learned it was the only thing he had that said Porsche on it.) And this lively, smiling guy introduces himself as Guccione in an English accent. I start talking back in my English accent. After a minute and a half I realize he's not kidding. The guy is English. So I shift back into an American dialect and he's completely unfazed. We have an excellent talk about the impoverished state of the young, wild, free-range press. We agree that there is no music magazine and that it would be a fine thing indeed to manufacture one.

I have a good feeling about this magazine. Bob shows me the logo, some cover ideas. It just might work I think. Then a word came back to me. work. I realized I was being offered some sort of regular job and I backed off. Well, I'd love to write for you. Editor? I know just the guy. The only problem is that he lives out in Sag Harbor, Long Island and that's too far to commute.

In a couple of days Scott Cohen has signed on as editor. Bob says he can come in a few days a week and do the rest of his work at home. Immediately I volunteered to become an editor and I am sworn in as such on a worn copy of Lillian Rosen's *Encyclopedia of Rock*.

I forgot to mention that our meeting took place in the offices of *Penthouse*, a magazine founded, owned and operated by Bob's dad, and our



In the beginning (Clockwise from top left): Glenn O'Brien, Scott Cohen, Gregg Weatherby, Rhonda Fitzer, G. O'Brien, George DuBose, Diana Fitzer, Cohen, Sue Cummings, Karen Dolan, Felice Arden, DuBose, O'Brien, Ed Rosen, Bob Guccione, Jr., Mark Weinberg.

quarters were located there. I found it a little strange. I find all offices strange, but here we were planning a new magazine in an office where they answered the phone "Penthouse/Omnit/New Look" (the last a now defunct Guccione magazine). I used to complain to Bob that our phone should be answered SPIN, but as I recall he never answered. I assume that the rent was right.

Scott Cohen and I shared an office. I can't remember what our titles were. I remember we didn't want to be called Senior Editors because we were afraid that someone might think we should be playing golf in Florida instead of editing a rock magazine. I do remember that Bob wouldn't let me have the title Modern Living Editor and in a way I never forgave him for that. Anyway, we needn't have worried about being thought of as old, since the Executive Editor was a guy with actual gray hair, a fine fellow named Edward Rosen. Ed also fit in at a rock magazine despite his age and the fact that his real interest was being photographed with Third World Lz1 owners. Strange people visited Ed.

Actually it was a very colorful staff. One nice thing was that when I arrived Bob's secretary was about six months pregnant (by someone else) and it seems to me that the baby came within hours of the delivery of our first issue of SPIN. Somewhere there's a baby out there named SPIN.

It was a truly odd staff. There was an existentialist punk girl writer/sub-editor

who was like the Marquis de Sade trapped in the body of Sandy Dennis. She was the first person who really brought the idea of punk nihilism home to me. After a year or so she moved to California and I think became a horseback riding instructor. We had a very cute receptionist who was like what you'd get by combining the Patty Duke Show with the Addams Family. She only wore black and had the blackest hair and the whitest skin I'd ever seen. Then one day she got blue contacts, and someone hired her as an executive. The first advertising director was the fastest talking woman I've ever met. I remember that Scott and I changed offices once because we couldn't write because her voice came through a six-inch thick wall.

It may just be nostalgia but it seems to me everyone who worked at SPIN in its earliest days was truly wacky. My pal the art director cared only about golf, drums, the Clash and girls in that order. Our photo editor was mainly interested in obscure Volvo parts. And there was a substantial turnover in the staff from the beginning. Some went nuts and quit, some just went out for lunch one day and never returned, others were fired by Bob. But the remarkable thing about Bob was the he loved to hire people back. Although he fired almost everyone once, for a few minutes at least. I think if you check the current masthead you might find someone on their third or fourth tour of duty. And you'll still find Bob's name up there on

the top in big, bold type. I always admired the confidence Bob showed using that bold type for his own name. But I could never forgive him for not putting my name in italics. I tried firing him, but he just laughed and sent one of his typical karate kicks whizzing past my Adam's apple. If he had worn platform shoes, I'd be a dead man today.

SPIN was fun. It wasn't like working for a regular magazine. Bob wasn't one of those publishers who is obsessed with the anal compulsions of copy editing and fact checking. We had those people, mind you, but usually a good solid glare was all it took to silence them. The worst thing about those old days of SPIN was that there were no windows in our offices. This may have saved a few lives, but usually the office was too hot or too cold. When it was we had to make up some excuse to have a meeting with Bob because he had a window. Meetings with Bob were often lively and fun. The only horror was that Bob would take nearly all of his phone calls and then jabber away while we sat waiting. Eventually I learned to slip out of meetings, go to the receptionist and say "Bob says to hold all of his calls." If she bought it we'd be home free unless David Brenner called. Or an attractive female writer or photographer. The other horrible thing about Bob's office was that it was a Black Hole of paper. Manuscripts, memos, originals, copies—documents left on his desk were never seen again. Sometimes for the best.

Things have changed at SPIN since those good old days. Now SPIN has its own offices at the SPIN Building. When you call up they answer "Hello SPIN!" in a bright, cheery manner. If you can impersonate Howard Stern's Darth Vader voice you can get right through to Bob. And if you drop in you notice that the office is filled with the kind of young people you expect to be involved in a magazine close to the soul of rock'n'roll. Yes, unpaid college interns. But as much as SPIN has changed, yup, that much has remained the same. It's still wild. It's still willing to take chances. To risk stupidity at the chance of achieving brilliance. To cover what no rock magazine has covered before. (Although it might cover what a rock has covered before.) I know that I'm proud to have been associated with SPIN. As far as I can tell it's still rock journalism at its best. It's still willing to check out the outlaws and the oddballs and take on tough questions. And, uh, Bob, do you pay on acceptance man?

Mark Weinberg



advice I possibly could offer. To go along with HIV as the cause of AIDS, based on my experience with retroviruses, would have been irresponsible.

Also, I believe in scientific honesty. I think in the long run, the truth does catch up with science. Sometime. It may take years, but it will someday catch up with them. I mean, it would look ridiculous if all of us would have made this mistake, and 10 years later people would laugh at us, saying, "Look at those old fools. They all believed viruses cause AIDS or viruses cause cancer, when they didn't." So, having spent 25 years on it already, I know what I'm talking about, and I don't want to be laughed at in 25 years. So that's an ego element, you might say.

**But there are those who have studied retroviruses as long as you have who disagree with you. How do you interpret that?**

That is for me hard to analyze. It's part of the human mind that is hard to fathom for me, since there is no scientific proof for the HIV-AIDS hypothesis. I don't know how people make up their minds, how they fall in love, how they choose a religion and how they become nationalistic. Those are beyond rational, beyond the reach of reason. I think the human mind often makes decisions that are totally irrational.

By contrast, a scientist has to be prepared to question everything, all the time. Exactly as Albert Einstein said: "The important thing is not to stop questioning." And as I learned more than ever before in this debate, even some of the most illustrious scientists are not prepared to do that. They have grown up with a system that they don't want to question anymore. And, in particular, if they have succeeded in it

**"Well if I were so homophobic, why would I care how they die?"**

and have made a career in it.

**Mathilde Krim once said to us, "We cannot prove that HIV causes AIDS, and Dr. Duesberg cannot prove that it doesn't." Do you have any study in mind, a lab study, a controlled study, that could prove your theory that HIV is not the cause of AIDS?**

The last paragraph of my *Proceedings* paper is entirely dedicated to answering this question. I have made several very specific proposals on how to do this. I said we need controlled epidemiological studies—for example, in hemophiliacs or in babies. We have to compare antibody-positives to otherwise totally comparable risk groups without the antibody. This would tell us whether the presence of the antibody or the virus contribute to the diseases. If so, then we have an epidemiological argument for HIV. If not, we have nothing.

Biochemically, I answered them: I think I cannot see any experiment worth doing for me in view of what I know about retroviruses and what has already been published about HIV in AIDS, namely that it isn't active, that it's only found in one out of every thousand cells that are lost during AIDS. It would have to be in every one of them in order for me to

make it a worthwhile experiment. And the disease would have to appear in step with virus replication, rather than 10 years later, on the average.

So none of these arguments give me even a slightly plausible point of departure on which to base an experiment. I would consider it, from what I know about HIV and AIDS now, a complete waste of time to do even one experiment with HIV. But the epidemiology could benefit from a controlled study. That not one of them has ever been done by all these epidemiologists and HIV researchers is interesting.

**How has Gallo's reaction to you been? Has it changed at all?**

It was always very emotional. Once we had a debate, and he got so excited he got off the elevator on the wrong floor, in his own building. He said I was totally off the mark, that he couldn't talk to me about it any more. Then he avoided me because he said he couldn't talk about HIV with me without shrieking. The latest is, he called me a few days ago without mentioning any science. I think he wants to preserve our personal relationship, and just not mention the scientific controversy. That of course is very difficult at this point.

On several occasions, he's canceled out on meetings because I was invited. There was one meeting held in Greece last year with the whole retrovirus club. I looked at the program, and it didn't have my name on it. One of the organizers promised me money if I would go to Greece, provided I didn't speak or show up at the discussions. I said I was busy anyway, but I was flattered by their reactions to me—that my arguments made such a strong impression they were buying me a vacation in Greece.



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ALBUM

### SPINS

1	Johnny Cash	Boom Chicka Boom
2	Rush	Presto
3	The Chills	Submarine Belts
4	Shark Island	Law Of The Order
5	Law & Order	Gully Of Innocence
6	Kylie Minogue	Enjoy Yourself
7	Earth, Wind And Fire	Heritage
8	The Cramps	Stay Sick
9	Michael Penn	March
10	Thin White Rope	Sack Full Of Silver
11	Hanoi Rocks	Back To Mystery City
12	Hanoi Rocks	Bangkok Shocks, Saigon Shakes, Hanoi Rocks
13	Hanoi Rocks	Self Destruction Blues

### HEAVY ROTATION

1	The Mission UK	Carved In Sand
2	Sinead O'Connor	I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got
3	ABC	UP
4	Lil Louis And The World	From The Mind Of Lil Louis
5	Cowboy Junkies	The Caution Horses
6	The Cramps	Stay Sick

### COLLEGE RADIO TOP 30

1	Ministry	The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste
2	Jesus And Mary Chain	Automatic
3	Kate Bush	The Sensual World
4	Creatures	Boomerang
5	Eleventh Dream Day	Beet
6	Psychodelic Furs	Book Of Days
7	Nine Inch Nails	Pretty Hate Machine
8	Ian McCulloch	Candleland
9	Wonder Stuff	Hup
10	Smithereens	11
11	Primitives	Pure
12	Peter Murphy	Deep
13	Skinny Puppy	Rebels
14	Red Lorry Yellow Lorry	Blow
15	Dramarama	Stuck In Wonderland
16	Laurie Anderson	Strange Angels
17	Bleak Babies	Earwig
18	Michelle Shocked	Captain Swing
19	Mekons	Rock N' Roll
20	Lanny Kravitz	Let Love Rule
21	Mudhoney	Mudhoney
22	Screaming Blue Messiahs	Totally Religious
23	Opal	Early Recordings
24	Feedtime	Suction
25	Mighty Lemon Drops	Laughter
26	Michael Penn	March
27	Red Hot Chili Peppers	Mother's Milk
28	Camper Van Beethoven	Key Lime Pie
29	Galaxie 500	On Fire
30	Morrisey	Ouja Board, Ouija Board (5")

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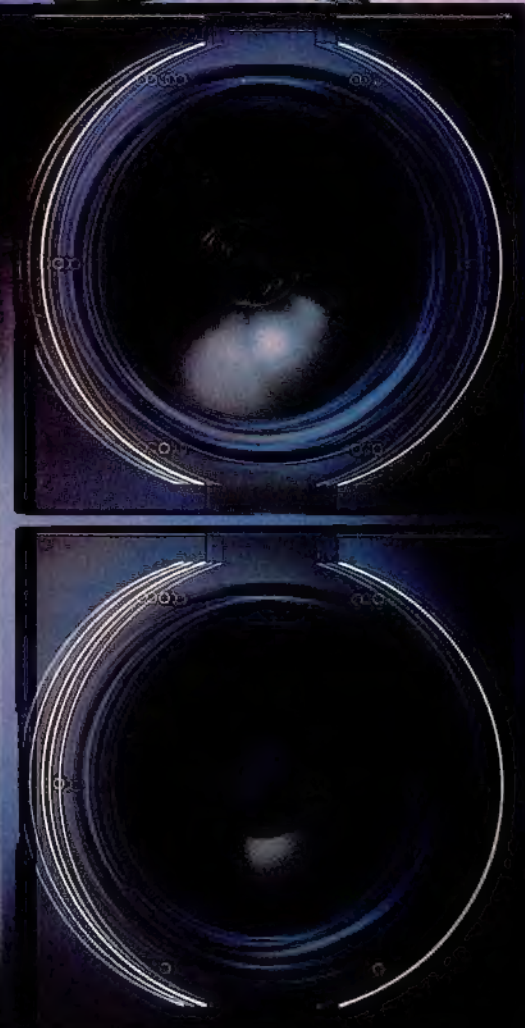


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Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

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17 mg. "tar", 1.2 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.